

PERSONAL WITNESS

*Israel
Through My
Eyes*

ABBA EBAN

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FIRST STEPS IN WASHINGTON

UNTIL I RECEIVED the unexpected telegram from Sharett at my hotel in Atlanta, the prospect of being ambassador to Washington had never entered my head. I was prepared to continue an exclusively UN career during years when the exciting challenges of 1947–1948 seemed unlikely to recur in that forum. This was not a tragic fate for a thirty-five-year-old diplomat. If I feared being swamped by torrents of legalistic UN rhetoric, I would be consoled by having a platform for political dialogue and large access to the media. My policy in the UN had always been to forget the immediate, specialized audience and to address my language and emotion to the wider world beyond. The UN was then a more resonant platform than it became in the 1960s and 1970s. I was even seduced by the idea that Israel would not be the permanent victim appealing for support or compassion. We might perhaps earn a role in international issues outside the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This latter hope was short-lived. An incident in the UN General Assembly illustrated the degree to which regional hostility would inhibit our international role. In the discussion of a cease-fire in Korea I managed to find a formulation that won wide acceptance among delegates, since it did not contain Cold War language. *The New York Times* of January 13, 1952, had a front-page headline announcing “an Israeli initiative” to end the Korean war. This eruption of Israel into the central international arena seemed eccentric. The underlying logic was that any cease-fire to be taken seriously by China and North Korea would have to be sponsored by a country that was not fighting in Korea.

The British delegate, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, asked the Indian delegate, Beneraj Rau, to suggest that I file my proposal on Israel’s behalf before the Communist countries could seize the procedural deadline.

The rest of the story and its conclusion is narrated in the memoirs of the foreign minister (who later became the prime minister) of Canada, Lester Pearson:

Everything should have gone smoothly today, but the contrary was the case. The difficulty arose over the fact that the resolution sponsoring the statement and referring it to Peking "for their observation" had been sponsored by Israel. This was enough to arouse the ire and opposition of the Arabs, who, one after the other this morning, recanted their earlier decision of approval. . . . I then got hold of Eban, Jebb and Padilla Nervo of Mexico, went to the Hidden House Restaurant (an appropriate place) for lunch and discussion. Nervo promised to persuade the chairman and Eban agreed that if the statement of principles was carried, he would withdraw his resolution.

Pearson went on to record that Norway later proposed the identical text that I had formulated and that "Eban therefore withdrew his own resolution completely. Now we can sit back and see what happens in Peking during the next few days. And I can go to Ottawa."

In later years, statesmen like Pearson, Jebb and Benegal Rau would not even trouble to seek Israel's aid to resolve crises, knowing that this would automatically lose available Arab votes. I reconciled myself to the idea that our work in the United Nations would have to be limited to our own national concerns.

A break in this tradition came a few months later when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles insisted on my membership in the Peace Observation Committee established after the Korean armistice, and again when Dag Hammarskjöld as UN secretary-general in 1963 supported my election as vice president of the UN Conference on Science and Technology and as a member of the UN committee that continued the work of the conference. These latter two appointments, however, were personal gestures that acknowledged a special role that I had played when I brought eminent scientists and leaders of developing countries together in the Rehovot Conference of 1960.

Before that, Israel's only success in a UN electoral contest was in 1953 when I was unexpectedly elected to the higher dignity of a vice president of the UN General Assembly, paradoxically at a time when Israel was being condemned in the Security Council for reprisal actions.

The Korean experience convinced me that, apart from intermittent crises, the center of gravity of my work would be in Washington.

I had been told that Justice Felix Frankfurter, having heard that Eliahu Elath was going to be replaced but without having heard who his successor was to be, said either to Ben-Gurion or to Sharett: "Please don't send us a too clever Jew." Nobody was ever able to obtain confirmation of this remark. My own instinct at the time was to wonder why Frankfurter upon his appointment to the Supreme Court was regarded by all his brethren on the Supreme Court as "a much too clever Jew," should want the Israeli Embassy to be headed by a foolish Jew. I already knew Felix Frankfurter very well. He

was a man of effervescent intellectual activity, but he also emitted a constant stream of froth and foam. In later years, our friendship was based on an agreement to listen carefully to each other, although listening to others was not a quality for which either of us was uniquely celebrated.

Many of my friends, and others who could not be so defined, predicted that I would find it hard to keep my two embassies in harness. In the event, that difficulty would come to expression only during the three months in which the General Assembly was in session. Each autumn my life was a tale of two cities. Washington and New York are two separate realms of experience, so that movement between them is very much like foreign travel.

My inauguration into the life of the Washington diplomatic service was gradual. I could not cut loose from the UN delegation, although it was comforting to know that Arthur Lourie, a man of cultivated mind and shining integrity, would be my deputy at UN headquarters while simultaneously holding his function as the consul general in New York. He was succeeded later in his UN function by Mordechai (Reggie) Kidron, whose candor and realism often embroiled him in tensions with Golda Meir.

I found that I was not alone in bearing the double load. On airliners and trains bearing their distinguished diplomatic cargo between the two cities I often used to encounter Sir Carl Berendsen, a New Zealander of gravelly voice and a "no nonsense" demeanor, who was one of our most ardent supporters in the crucial debates of 1947-1948. Another shuttle diplomat was Charles Malik, a Lebanese Christian statesman and scholar. Malik was our most formidable adversary on the parliamentary floor, but he was caught up in a tormenting conflict between his Arab patriotism and his Christian and humanistic values. In his heart he probably had a stronger affinity with me than with his Muslim fellow-Arabs. Most of them applauded his rhetorical skills but doubted the authenticity of his anti-Zionist credentials.

Malik, who later became a president of the UN General Assembly, held all the records for the frequency with which he invoked the Creator in his political discourse. He seemed oblivious of the fact that, after the admission of many new members in the fifties, the Christian God no longer commanded a two-thirds majority in the United Nations. Countries inspired by the biblical culture would soon be a small minority. I doubt if Israel could have won admission to membership of any international agency in the atmosphere and composition of the UN in the sixties and seventies.

Malik sat immediately to my right in the days before Ireland and Italy acceded to membership in the United Nations and separated us by alphabetical chance from Iraq and Lebanon to our right and our left. Charles Malik and I could feel a constrained and stifled "reaching out" toward each other that neither of us was free to express.

It would be different in 1957 when the Lebanese Christian leadership, threatened with subversion by the hegemonistic ambitions of the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser, would call for American marines and expect

Israel to support their arrival. Malik was then the second man in the Christian government headed by Camille Chamoun, and he and I would exchange surreptitious notes at the UN committee table like schoolboys evading a schoolmaster's vigilant gaze. He reached out for a meeting with me in 1982 when Beirut was aflame after successive Syrian, Palestinian and Israeli bombardments and implored me to come to Beirut. By then he was crippled with gangrene and saddened by the eclipse of his particular vision, at the center of which was the image of a Christian Lebanon mediating across the Mediterranean between Christianity and Islam, between Europe and Asia-Africa, between the rationalism of the West and the resurgent faiths of the East. All I have from him now are a few scribbled chits and a letter that he wrote when I congratulated him on the birth of his son: "Dear Ambassador Eban, it was most kind of you to have sent us your personal congratulatory note for which we sincerely thank you. We too wish you and Mrs. Eban the true and abiding happiness that can in truth come only from God."

It is typical of the rancor of those times that such a normal, human courtesy would have been a sensation if it had become known in the Arab countries.

The ambassadors who served simultaneously at the United Nations and in Washington developed a club-like solidarity. The motive of my double appointment was Ben-Gurion's indication to Sharett that the American sector of Israel's international relations interested him far more than the United Nations. The embassy in Washington should, therefore, be headed by somebody with whom he, as prime minister, could have a confident relationship. This was not true of the relations between Ben-Gurion and Eliahu Elath. Elath was a man of handsome appearance with an ardent talent for exposition. This, however, came to expression in individual conversations, less so, or hardly at all, in his public appearances. Moreover, he had not learned that Ben-Gurion's quickness of mind was such that it was seldom necessary to make a point with him in identical terms in more than one sentence. Above everything else, however, Ben-Gurion had the feeling that relations with the State Department and other ministries in Washington should not be the only field of activity for an Israeli ambassador. As one Israeli newspaper editor said:

There was a general feeling in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that we ought not to measure an Israeli Ambassador by any general standard. Washington was growing in importance to us and we realized we must have as Ambassador a man who could attain a public position so that when he came into the State Department, they would not look at him in relation to a few hundred thousand Jews in Israel but as somebody whose word would carry weight in the world and especially throughout the United States.

When Ben-Gurion raised this point with Sharett, the foreign minister pointed out that at that time I was the only Israeli diplomat who already had that qualification.

Eliahu Elath was not being discarded. He was going to be Israel's first full ambassador at the Court of St. James's at a period when Britain's position in the Middle East was hardly less influential than that of the United States. Indeed, in terms of physical presence and day-to-day operational activity, Britain was still the senior partner. It had a large force in Egypt as the guardian of the Suez Canal. Its resident envoys were virtually the rulers of Jordan, and it had a very strong hold on the policies of the pro-Western monarchy in Iraq.

I made a few journeys to Washington in advance of my presentation of credentials in order to test the lay of the land. I came away with a feeling that my task would not be easy. It was true that after a period of frigidity toward the idea of an independent Israel, the United States had come to our international rescue on several occasions. It had abandoned support of the Bernadotte report. It had resisted attempts to excise the Negev from the Israeli map, and after the appalling tensions and confrontations with us on its trusteeship proposal, in which it had frankly attempted to prevent us from becoming an independent state, it had reversed its position by recognizing Israel and fiercely denouncing the Arab assaults on us with memorable speeches in the Security Council.

I could not, however, ignore the fact that all of these had been cliff-hanger occasions. We had been on the verge of failure until Harry Truman, like a knight on a white steed, arrived when all seemed lost and personally imposed his policy on the Washington Establishment. In most of these cases, a unique personal rapport had developed between Truman and Weizmann and brought us a desired result. I did not believe that this situation could endure. These special procedures were no sort of basis on which an embassy could conduct its work or create a tradition. I was inheriting a relationship that had no fixed institutional framework.

I knew in my heart that Weizmann, whose health had deteriorated sharply, would never come to the United States again. Letters over his signature did not have the same effect as his style and presence. Moreover, there was no evidence that Truman's warm sentiment and astute sense of political expediency were at work on the mind of Dean Acheson and other departmental heads in the capital.

Eliahu and Zahava Elath had lived in a hotel. Suzy and I therefore had to concern ourselves with the establishment of an ambassadorial residence. In addition, we were crowded into narrow quarters of the chancery at 2210 Massachusetts Avenue. Our nearest neighbor was the Embassy of Luxembourg, which seemed to be incongruously larger and more spacious than our own. They had much more space for far fewer problems.

My feeling that the relationship between the United States and Israel

would need more precise frameworks was strengthened by the fact that we were not even eligible as beneficiaries of the United States foreign aid program. These had begun in the context of the European Recovery Program and the Marshall Plan without much relevance to nations outside Europe. The secretary of state himself, Dean Acheson, had never concealed his belief that Europe was the main arena in which American diplomacy had to operate. Until the end of his tenure in 1953, he never showed effusive interest in countries of the Third World.

An exception to his European emphasis lay in Korea, where large American forces were involved. Dean Acheson had taken a leading part in the decision by the United States to make this a test of the confrontation between the West and an expansionist Communist empire. This was the least that he could do to atone for an unfortunate statement in which he had enumerated the security commitments of the United States and omitted South Korea from his list. This was not a triumph for the principle of deterrence.

Truman was at the height of his power and self-confidence in 1950. His sympathies with Israel had been tested under pressure, but he was also capable of irascible reactions. His friendship had to be carefully tended and was largely dependent on the creation of personal chemistry between himself and his interlocutors. It was clear that we could not come to him for every small decision.

Acheson's view of Truman's Zionism was more complex. He was later to write:

Both Prime Minister Attlee and Ernest Bevin, in the heat of their annoyance with Truman, charged that his support of Jewish immigration into Palestine was inspired by domestic political opportunism. This was not true, despite the confirming observations of some of his associates. Mr. Truman held deep-seated convictions on many subjects. From many years of talk with Truman, I know that the Balfour Declaration had always seemed to him to go hand in hand with the noble policies of Woodrow Wilson, especially the principle of self-determination. I did not share the President's view on the Palestine solution to the pressing and desperate plight of great numbers of displaced Jews in Eastern Europe. The number that could be absorbed by Arab Palestine without creating a grave political problem would be inadequate and to transform the country into a Jewish state capable of receiving a million or more immigrants could vastly exacerbate the political western interests in the near East. From Justice Brandeis, whom I revered, and from Felix Frankfurter, my intimate friend, I have learned to understand but not to share the mystical emotion of the Jews to return to Palestine and end the diaspora. In urging Zionism as an American governmental policy, they had allowed, so I thought, their emotion to obscure the totality of American interests.

Zionism was the only topic that Felix and I had by mutual consent excluded from our far-ranging daily talks.

Acheson, with his usual trenchant phraseology, has described how the war between Israel and the Arabs was almost a mild affair compared with the internecine fighting between pro-Israelis and anti-Israelis in Washington.

It was indeed a stricken field. Attlee had deftly exchanged the United States for Britain as the most disliked power in the Middle East. The center of battle was moving from Israelis and British fighting in Palestine to civil war along the Potomac.

Acheson's coolness toward Zionism was, however, counterbalanced by a much stronger element in his outlook: He insisted on meticulous obedience to the president's will. When one considers the divergent temperaments of Truman and Acheson and the fact that Secretary of State George Marshall had never hesitated to grapple with President Truman to a degree that approached insubordination, and when one also takes into account Acheson's superior intellect, his fidelity to Truman appears profoundly moving. Thus, Acheson made no demur when on October 4, 1948, at a meeting in Madison Square Garden, Truman, shrewdly anticipating a pro-Zionist statement by his rival, Governor Dewey, announced that he would oppose any tampering with the UN partition resolution, would continue his efforts for the immigration of Jews into Israel and that some solution based upon partition "would command the support of public opinion in the United States."

The fact that we were constantly rescued from defeat by Truman's personal interventions gave me reason to predict a hard struggle in Washington. Our successes all seemed to hang on a single slender thread. Another weakness was that in the Congress, Israel was supported mainly by senators and representatives from states with large Jewish populations. Moreover, Eliahu Elath, despite his diplomatic skills, was not an eloquent man and had made little use of the radio and the public platforms as a means of enlisting public support to counteract the coolness of official Washington.

It was with those cautious estimates of my prospects that I got up on the morning of September 17 in the totally inadequate home in Myrtle Street provided by a fiscally cautious Israeli government and set out to present credentials to President Truman.

Having seen photographs of other ambassadors presenting their credentials to presidents, I was aware that this is normally one of the most pompous ceremonies in American democratic procedure, although not quite as fanciful as the horses and carriages and plumed hats of ambassadors presenting themselves at Buckingham Palace. I was routinely attired in a dark suit, silver tie and homburg hat, which in those days was an identity card of a diplomat.

A White House aide escorted me into the president's office. It was hot, the air conditioner was not working, and President Truman was at his desk with his coat off and his bright red suspenders in full view.

It occurred to me that I was sitting a few yards away from the most powerful leader in the history of mankind. More powerful than the emperors of antiquity, than Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, the rulers of the British Empire at its zenith, or the Russian and German dictators of the twentieth century.

There had never been a time when one nation held such predominance of military and economic power as that wielded by the United States in the years immediately after World War II. America had attained this primacy during a conflict in which all the other participants had suffered defeat or devastation or exhaustion or all of them together. The United States had a monopoly of nuclear weapons, created half of the world's product, and dominated the voting systems in the new international agencies. The United States was not just a superpower, it was a monpower.

As I looked at Truman I wondered if power had ever been expressed with such total absence of pretention and pomp. He was no more than five feet nine inches tall, with square shoulders, a long sharply edged nose, steel-rimmed spectacles and gray-white hair cut with care and precision and smoothly brushed. If you passed him in the street of a small town, you would imagine that he was on the way to a small office in the central part of a moderately sized building. If there was such a thing as an "imperial presidency" no one seemed to have broken the news to Harry Truman of Independence, Missouri.

I was carrying with me documents wrapped in leather, containing the letters of credence that would assure President Truman that I really was what I purported to be, namely the ambassador extraordinary and envoy plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to the United States of America. Credentials are formulated almost entirely in capital letters and are rarely noted for literary grace or innovation. It was evident that the president feared that I might follow tradition and actually declaim the text. In order to preempt this danger, he moved with vigor and precision. He snatched the documents from my hands and said, "Let's cut out the crap and have a good talk." He then cast a triumphant glare at the disconcerted chief of protocol, who had rehearsed me for a much more eloquent ritual. It was soon to emerge that Truman regarded his own State Department as a hostile foreign power.

Our conversation, without the forbidden "crap," took its course for forty minutes. This caused further disquiet to the chief of protocol, who knew that the Dutch ambassador, Hermann Van Roijen, was waiting for the privilege of being my junior by half an hour. Truman's sentences flowed without any expectation that his voice or formulations would rise even spasmodically above the solid flat farming earth in which he had been nurtured. Yet there was no difficulty in grasping the core of his thought. He praised the Israeli

government for speaking in favor of his action in Korea. "If a small country out there can be swallowed up, it's going to be tough for other small countries like yours." He told me twice that his decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan had caused him no anguish or discomfort. From this I deduced that his anguish and discomfort must have been intense. If it were not, why should he bring this up in a conversation with no applicable context? He warned me to beware of the "striped pants boys in the State Department," staring reproachfully at the striped pants of the hapless chief of protocol. From this charge he exempted Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson ("He does what he knows I want and even seems to like doing it. In addition, he has more brains than a dozen ordinary men").

His language was lean but without obscurity. Whatever might have been the limitation of his powers of expression, his courage and independence of decision were unique. I was to have more meetings with him than are usual between a president and an ambassador from a small country. I knew, however, that since his chief talent was decision, it would be a mistake to involve him in abstract discussion or generalized conversation. It would be fruitful to do what Chaim Weizmann had the genius to do—to take one subject requiring a yes or no decision, to focus briefly upon it, and to allow no other issue to intrude. Weizmann had applied this technique in the case of the Negev in 1947 and of partition and the recognition of Israeli statehood in 1948. The results were spectacular.

From this memorable White House encounter, I went back to our chancery. The staff that I inherited was small for a full embassy. The counselor, Moshe Keren, a German-Jewish immigrant of centrist views and a love of precision, would shortly leave to be succeeded by the formidable Teddy Kollek. There were two first secretaries, a second secretary, a press attaché, an agricultural attaché and an economic counselor. More by coincidence than plan, my first military attaché was Suzy's brother-in-law, Chaim Herzog, who had completed his assignment as head of Intelligence of the Israeli Army. Neither he nor I predicted that he would become Israel's sixth president.

I now discovered the difference between life in New York and in Washington. At the United Nations there had been few social obligations, but in the capital much of the business of diplomacy seemed to be conducted at receptions, dinners, balls and cocktail parties. The latter institution disquieted me considerably, since I have never believed that the most rational method of discourse is to stand up with a cold glass conversing amid a deafening hubbub of conflicting voices. I once wrote and said that the cocktail party is the only human institution that does not even have a theoretical justification. It involves proximity without communication. Yet as a method of creating a contact, or of watching over its continuation, there was no substitute for the occasions when deals and promises were discussed with cocktail glasses in hand or between the dinner courses. In Washington, if one does not want

to lay constant siege to a departmental head's office, processes of discussion and decision sometimes have to be spasmodic and to include informal stages.

On the number plates of my automobile, I was now number fifty-nine with the Dutch Van Roijen as number sixty. That was the number of embassies in Washington, which today exceeds 150. I could see that it would not be wise to ignore the social imperatives. To avoid "calling" or to "regret" an invitation might be taken as a diplomatic affront. The only "free" people in society are those who can decline a dinner invitation without giving a reason or excuse, and an ambassador is closer to slavery than to freedom. There had to be reciprocity, and here Suzy's ideal qualifications as a hostess and the bearer of unlimited personal charm would be a dividend for Israel's diplomacy.

I made an early decision that 1951 must become a breakthrough year in American-Israeli relations. When I surveyed the situation at the end of December, I could feel that this intention had been fulfilled. After patient work in Washington, with some offshoots in the United Nations, I could take satisfaction in several achievements. There is a memorable photograph of me signing a document with Secretary of State Acheson. This accord created legal eligibility for Israel in two fields. It confirmed that we were an acceptable candidate for the receipt of aid from the American foreign aid programs, and it laid the basis, carefully prepared by Herzog, for Israeli eligibility to acquire arms in the United States. In neither case did eligibility itself create a certainty of concrete allocations, but I could see that the United States is an obsessively legalist nation. The secretaries of state with whom I had to deal were all lawyers. So were many of their Cabinet colleagues and a preponderant number of senators and representatives. As a pioneer in this relationship, I thought it essential to create the necessary legal frameworks.

At a time when Israel's major anxieties were in the economic field, I had developed relationships in the Congress of the United States that resulted in what were in those days regarded as relatively vast funds for the Israeli economy. A congressional appropriation of seventy million dollars and export-import bank loans totaling \$135 million all sound like small change in relation to the inflationary heights of 1992. It must be remembered, however, that in those days, Israel's total earnings of foreign currency from exports were \$50 million and the revenues to Israel from the United Jewish Appeal were just over \$60 million. The millions of the 1950s are proportionally nearly equal to the tens of millions of the 1990s.

Moreover, in pursuit of a far-ranging program for Israel's economy sponsored by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, my colleagues and I had successfully negotiated Israel's eligibility for the sale of its bonds in the United States. In the light of Israel's meager productivity and exports at that time, this denoted an act of friendship and not merely a certificate of commercial correctness. Our learned economic adviser, Oscar Gass, had told me that the experts whom he had consulted had been astounded by this success. They had

predicted that we would not be able to sell our securities in the American market and if we sold them we would not be able to repay. Four decades and four billion dollars of repaid bond sales later, I was able to observe that an expert is someone who understands everything—but nothing else.

Another achievement in September 1951 was a favorable response to the complaint that I had made to the UN Security Council against Egypt's blockade of Israel's approaches to the Red Sea via the Suez Canal. Here I had an important ally in Sir Gladwyn Jebb, the chief delegate of the United Kingdom. Our relations with London had substantially improved since the departure of Ernest Bevin, who was succeeded by Herbert Morrison in April 1950.

Sir Gladwyn had competed in frequency with my appearances in the televised broadcasts from the United Nations. The American public admired his tranquil style of speech in defense of the Western action in Korea. He had to make a considerable effort to adjust his Foreign Office manner to the realities of the American media. On one occasion, he and I were interviewed on a local station about the international situation as seen from the UN. After our interchange of jocularities, he was more startled than I was to hear the moderator announce: "Sir Gladwyn Jebb and Ambassador Eban have come to you by courtesy of Manischewitz Matzoh Balls and Kreplach."

Our admission to the U.S. foreign aid club, the loans and grants from U.S. banking agencies, the condemnation of the Egyptian maritime blockade and American support for our compensation claims from the West German government all converged in the fall and winter of 1951. At the end of the year an appreciative telegram came from Ben-Gurion.

I was also able to plant what then appeared to be small seeds in the American Jewish community: They were later to grow into luxuriant foliage. The fraternal support of Israel by American Jews through their organizations was obviously an important element in Israel's strength. The fact that an Israeli ambassador appearing at the White House or the State Department was known, however discreetly, to have a large backing behind him gave particular weight to our representations and elevated the level at which American-Israeli affairs were transacted. Here, however, there was a difficulty: American Jewry has a dispersed structure. It is recalcitrant to centralization. In this respect, American Jewry reflects the federalist tradition of the United States as a whole. My standard of comparison was with Britain. Since British society is organized as a pyramid, with authority flowing from the broad popular base upward through Parliament, individual ministries, the Cabinet and theoretically toward the Crown, it is natural to find British Jewry organized on the basis of a similar model. There is a single chief rabbi recognized as the spiritual authority. There is one Board of Deputies regarded, for obscure reasons, as representative of the Jewish community. There is even a single journal, *The Jewish Chronicle*, which justifiably calls itself "the organ of Anglo-Jewry." In the United States there is no chief rabbi,

no single centralized representative institution, and not a single Jewish periodical that can claim to speak for the Jewish community as a whole.

One prosaic result of this fragmentation was that my colleagues, and especially I myself, had to have separate communion with the Zionist Organization of America, Hadassah, the Pioneer Women, the B'nai B'rith, the Anti-Defamation League, the Orthodox, Reform and Conservative branches of religious Jewry, and the leaders of the United Jewish Appeal and the Bonds Organization. The exhaustion and repetitiveness of these occasions was becoming especially burdensome in the light of the fact that I was the head of two very busy embassies. After a Security Council meeting in May 1951 to discuss fighting near the Huleh Marshes, I fainted in the Security Council through nothing more organic than a recent lack both of food and of sleep. Ben-Gurion, who was on his only visit to the United States during the nine years of my stewardship, sent an anxious letter saying, "People like you are not all that plentiful. Look after yourself."

I therefore turned to Dr. Nahum Goldmann, who was in effect what medieval Jewish writers called the "Leader of the Exile," with an appeal that he convene the major Jewish organizations periodically for consultation with me in order to exchange views and impressions about the American-Israeli relationship.

Most organizations responded favorably to Goldmann's appeal on my behalf. The exception was the American Jewish Committee, which under its revered leaders, Judge Joseph Proskauer and Jacob Blaustein, worked in solitary devotion for American-Israeli relations while being unwilling to join with other organizations of less aristocratic lineage. A handwritten letter from me proposing collective consultation bears the date of May 25, 1951, from the now extinct Savoy Plaza Hotel. It is the constitutive document of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. From that time on, the work of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations has expanded into a recognized forum of American Jewry, acknowledged as such by the White House, State Department and Congress of the United States. At the same time, I invited Isaiah (Si) L. Kenen, a Canadian Jew, to come to Washington and, as a non-Israeli, to work on Capitol Hill to secure understanding of Israel's need for economic support. In my naïveté, I said and wrote to him that this might mean that he would have to stay in Washington for three months. Over thirty years later, Kenen was still in Washington, at the head of a modest but efficient organization—the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)—producing the Near East Report and creating a mass of links with leading members of both Houses of the Congress, supported by willing volunteers in individual cities.

Forty years later, I find it hard to imagine that we could ever have been effective in Washington without the active support of the Jewish Organizations and AIPAC. In my contacts with these organizations, I advised them to look for the common factor in the American and Israeli legacies, and to

win their points by mutual sympathy, not by abrasive confrontation. I stipulated that my support of AIPAC would be conditional on their avoidance of threats to individual senators and representatives. They and I also avoided the frequent use of the word "lobby." This is not a popular word in the United States, even though it is an accepted part of the democratic system. The idea of "lobby" implies an effort for a special interest to obtain more aid and consideration than those to which it is objectively entitled. The consequent atmosphere of incentives and pressures creates delicate situations, which must be handled with care on the underlying assumption that those who operate them have a parallel and equal concern for American and Israeli interests and are not the uncritical standard bearers of every Israeli position, including those most at variance with American consensus.

During the years when I guided these relationships as ambassador and foreign minister, we were not always able to avoid tensions between Israel and the United States. But there was not a single case in which we had been unable to bring these under restraint and to restore a routine of intimate cooperation.

Henry Kissinger has written that I regarded "objectivity" as the blind acceptance of all Israeli positions. I don't know how he would have described my more militant colleagues and supporters.

Here I had to fight a tendency, both in Israeli and in American Jewish opinion, to generalize every single collision of policies into a theory of "crisis" and sometimes of "betrayal." I once told an American ambassador who had been designated for service in Israel that he would find us very easy to get on with. "All you have to do is to agree with everything that we say." On the other hand, I added, even this was not a viable option since we do not say the same thing.

Israel does not reach its decisions by blind adherence to governmental dogma but rather by the interaction of alternative and contradictory choices. I took it for granted that while Israeli and American interests are nearly always parallel, that does not mean that they are always identical. Nor have I ever believed that an American Jew who takes a different view from that of the Israeli establishment is necessarily a violator of Jewish solidarity or a deserter from the struggle for Israeli security. He is very often simply a Jew who cares very much about Israeli values and who has a more incisive vision of damage that would result from extremist and strident self-assertion.

The test case during my tenure of office would of course be the Suez-Sinai War, in which there was something close to a rupture in American-Israeli relations. We had opposing strategies and interests. The basic strength of the relationship, however, was such that the tension lasted no more than a few weeks, after which Secretary Dulles and I were taking counsel on the common aim of curbing President Nasser's expansionist ambitions.

I was haunted by a traumatic recollection of a period before I became ambassador in which President Truman had been so offended by what he

called "immoderate pressure" that he shut himself hermetically against dialogue with the American Jewish community. The fact that we had been able to overcome that crisis by the intervention of the Truman-Weizmann friendship was something that I regarded as fortuitous. It held no assurance for the future.

On the face of it, the need to combine my ambassadorship in the United Nations with that in Washington appeared to be a burden. In the deeper sense it was helpful. Although it forced me to spend much time commuting between Washington and New York, my UN status was an advantage in Washington, where few ambassadors were in the public eye or had much national recognition. Our embassy residence was physically one of the most inaccessible and least splendid in the city. But it was a place to which other diplomats valued invitations.

My aim was to build a structure that would be resilient enough to absorb the divergences between American and Israeli attitudes that were bound to occur, and one that would not depend exclusively on presidential rescue operations that could no longer be counted upon. The key lay in American public opinion, at the center of which stood our Jewish solidarities. Israel, without the American Jews, is a small island of territory in an ocean of hostility. It lacks geopolitical weight. Israel plus the Jewish people is an eternal nation, striding across unlimited expanses of space and time. My task was to make Israel so acceptable to the American public that an administration would be reluctant to take confrontations to extreme lengths. But our need of American support was so intense that I could not afford the conventional routines. This explains my constant rush from Washington to college campuses to Jewish meetings to state houses to lecture platforms, to foreign policy councils and associations, and above all, to the electronic media. I did not observe any other ambassador in Washington leading such a frenzied existence.

This emphasis on Israel's place in public opinion helped me to succeed in the first two objectives that I sought: the acceptance of Israel for eligibility in the American aid programs when we were in danger of being crushed by the weight of immigration, and the attainment of American support for our claims on the Federal Republic of Germany.

These two objectives required different techniques. In the case of German compensation I needed a favorable nod from Dean Acheson, representing one of the occupation powers, in order that Adenauer, Nahum Goldmann and Ben-Gurion could pursue their negotiations in a framework of legality. This was the most burdensome task ever assigned to me, because I had to try to impress the cold, pragmatic Acheson with the horror of the Nazi crimes against the Jewish people. I was accompanied by David Horowitz, who had been my colleague as a liaison officer with the UN Special Committee and later became the first governor of the the Bank of Israel. Mindful of our successful experience in the UN, we made a combined assault that for the first

twenty minutes appeared to be having no result. There sat the secretary, a distinguished statesman and graduate of Yale, giving off an air of mahogany-paneled law offices, seemingly impervious to emotion, and stubborn in his belief that reason, not passion, should govern human destiny. For a time I had the feeling that it was more important for him to refrain from wrinkling his impeccable clothes than to listen to what we were saying.

There came a moment, however, when Horowitz and I were describing the brutality of the Nazi oppressor. Suddenly I saw Acheson wrinkle up his face as though he was about to collapse in deep emotion. He came very close to tears. Thereafter he became a constant supporter of our claim for compensation. He gave firm instructions to John J. McCloy, the high commissioner in Germany, to support our case. It was clear to me from then onward that Acheson's habit of staring into space uncomprehendingly whenever he heard emotional language was simply a veil under which he maintained a sensitive conscience and a passion for rectitude. He lived intimately by the ethic of the European Enlightenment and the American Founding Fathers.

My campaign in the Congress, however, illustrated the permanent eccentricity of Israel's diplomacy. My first soundings in the White House and in the State Department led me to believe that the Truman administration would include our country in the foreign aid package, at a rate roughly proportionate to our physical size. But Israel's physical size is of no use whatever to Israeli emissaries seeking inclusion in international programs. When an American Treasury secretary assured me that we could expect justice from his department, I replied, "I don't need justice, I need mercy."

Moreover, many professionals in the State Department and some congressional leaders found something eccentric in our application. The American foreign aid program was not universal in its scope. It was strictly focused on the rehabilitation of the European countries from the havoc of war and from the danger of inundation by Communist influence. This was not a fictitious danger: In France and Italy, Communist parties achieved electoral results that must have inspired disquiet for the future of democracy in Europe. In addition, the United States owed special consideration to Britain, which had held Hitler at bay during years when the United States was exasperatingly evasive in its responses to Hitlerist aggression.

It was obvious that there would have to be a special expression of "favoritism" in the Congress if Israel were to receive aid well beyond its political and geopolitical size. Accordingly, I began our soundings on Capitol Hill. In short time I reached the enviable position of having four members of the Congress willing to sponsor a bill irrespective of the views of the Executive Branch. The quartet had the power of long-range howitzer guns. My senatorial friends were Paul Douglas of Illinois and Robert Taft of Ohio. The support of Taft was a surprise to many of my friends, for in principle the austere, aloof senator was no friend of foreign countries. In his conversation with me, however, he confessed that there were two exceptions to his instinct

for restraint. One was Israel and the other India. I never managed or even attempted to elicit from him an explanation for his unexpected support of India, whose leaders were not beloved in the world of market economics, free enterprise and conservative statesmanship. In the House of Representatives the majority leader, John McCormack, and the minority leader, Joseph Martin, were willing to head the list of sponsors of the Israeli Aid bill.

There was an embarrassing moment when Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin invited me to his office in the Senate Building and asked me to include him in the list of sponsors of the Resolution urging Israel's inclusion in the foreign aid legislation. I knew that this would lead to the self-exclusion of the sponsors and others. I took refuge in the formal truth that I was merely a spectator of the exercise and that he would have to address his request to Senators Douglas and Taft. I never heard from him again. I must recall, however, that Israel and the Jews never became a target of McCarthy's denunciations.

Armed with my imposing quartet of sponsors and assisted at a later stage by Si Kenen and Teddy Kollek, I reached a point at which the majority of members of the Senate and a large number of representatives were willing to face the Truman-Acheson administration with the news that they expected a more generous approach to Israel's needs than to those of countries of similar size. This approach was so successful that by the time that I reached Secretary Acheson to make a formal application, I found him reacting with benevolent irony. He told me that it was very good of me to inform him of what we wanted. He knew very well that I had already secured the support of congressional leaders, both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, as well as the ear of the White House through the instrumentality of David Niles, who was the president's unofficial representative for contact with minorities, including Jews. It was extremely courteous on my part, said Acheson, to keep him in touch with these developments.

Acheson made this statement to me without any hint of indignation. What I was doing was unusual in the traditional sense, but knowing his president well, Acheson decided to accept the idea that Israel was a special case.

Since those early days, all American administrations have been willing to understand that Israeli embassies do not confine their efforts or concerns to the straight furrow of the executive branch. This particularity of Israeli diplomacy has not only survived but has developed in the ensuing decades. I saw no reason to be apologetic about this. Professional diplomats took for granted that the Arabs could parade their advantage in mineral and monetary wealth as well as in space and population. Why should Israel not deploy its compensating advantage by using its access to friendly public opinion? This did not seem invidious or illegitimate except to hidebound diplomatic traditionalists. Why should we alone be prudish about our chief asset?

There were two further innovations that I introduced into our embassy practice. It was normal for ambassadors to convene press meetings only

when they had something new to seek or to expound. I instituted regular meetings for general press briefings and discussions. I retain verbatim records of these meetings, which were attended by such revered pundits as the brothers Joe and Stewart Alsop, Arthur Krock, James Reston, Martin Agronsky, Marquis Childs, Cyrus Sulzberger and others.

I also made a pilgrimage to Georgetown to see Walter Lippmann, with whom it was necessary for ambassadors to deal on the same basis as with senior Cabinet members. Acceptance of his invitations was mandatory and to be able to invite him back was a sign of relaxed prestige. I recall his presence at an embassy function where Daniel Barenboim, a young musical prodigy from Israel, was exposed for the first time to an expectant audience. My only discomfort with Lippmann lay in his tortured relationship to his Jewishness. He, the son of Jacob and Sarah Lippmann, never discussed his origins and when the Holocaust was mentioned he reacted with due revulsion but always with an addendum that it would be salutary for Jews to be more discreet and reticent. He once expressed himself in a way that could be interpreted as insinuating that the habit of Jewish ladies in Miami to wear mink coats could be a contributory factor in leading Jews to persecution.

Another reinforcement that I sought in my effort to surround the embassy with friendly and vigilant American eyes was among what came to be called the "Wise Men" of Washington. The United States has an enviable talent for using the accumulated prestige of its statesmen and for putting them to work in disinterested counsel or in special missions. I made early contact with Arthur Dean, Dulles's law partner; John J. McCloy, who had been a U.S. high commissioner in Germany; Lucius Clay, the hero of the Berlin blockade; and with General Bedell Smith, a senior associate of Eisenhower in the world war. Bedell Smith had a close relationship with Secretary of State Dulles, under whom he subsequently served in the State Department mission to Cairo in 1955, which convinced the administration in Washington that Nasser was an incorrigible expansionist.

In my first visit to San Francisco, the citadel of the anti-Zionist Council for Judaism, the local Jewish grandees were so relieved to find that the Israeli ambassador did not have a beard and a Yiddish accent or wear a Hasidic hat, that they embraced me with obsequious warmth. Former anti-Zionists such as Fred Lazarus of Columbus, Ohio, and John Zellerbach and Philip Ehrlich of San Francisco became valued intermediaries between my embassy and the White House.

The eclipse of Jewish anti-Zionism was in full momentum. Even the most timorous and apprehensive American Jews who were in constant fear of being regarded as second-class Americans could not deny that their own government, parties and fellow citizens regarded Israel as a valued thread in the American tapestry. I could never decode the paradox according to which those Jews whose unreservedly American image seemed most unassailable were those who were most apprehensive of its erosion. They had benefited

immensely from an American pluralism, which respected coexisting loyalties, and yet they sometimes doubted their own right to acknowledge their diverse legacies. I took a mischievous pleasure in enlisting former members of the Council for Judaism in the Zionist purpose of cementing American-Israeli relations.

As the 1952 presidential election campaign drew near, there was a general fear among Israelis and American Jews that Truman's successive interventions had been a one-time act of grace that could not be relied upon when his successor would come to office.

In truth, there was nothing that American Jews did not fear. Support for Israel was regarded in many circles as a peculiarity of the Democratic Party and an individual part of Truman's world.

I was obsessed with the need to ensure continuity. I therefore suggested to Foreign Minister Sharett that we should use the General Assembly in Paris in 1952 to inaugurate a relationship with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had taken up his duties as Commander for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We visited him at his office outside Paris where NATO headquarters had been established. He spoke to us with amiability and fluency. On the other hand, when we came away we found it difficult to remember a single commitment that he might have made. He had the strange gift of being articulate without always being specific. This was because his thoughts were always well ahead of his capacity of expression. He frankly revealed to us his lack of roots in the understanding of Jewish problems. Taking us into his confidence, he said that having been brought up in Abilene, Kansas, he had not suspected the existence of Jews during much of his childhood and early youth. It is true that Jews were described in the Bible, but the Bible also spoke of cherubim and seraphim and other creatures who, to the best of his knowledge, no longer existed. He thought that Jews were in this category of extinct species, until, he said, "I came to New York and I found out how wrong I was."

While we were in his singularly stark and unattractive office, we had a good illustration of his self-controlled character. An officer came in and handed him a note. Having finished reading it, he said, "I'll have to leave you and prepare to go to London. King George VI has just died." I noticed that although he had been an intimate acquaintance of the monarch during the days of the war, he showed no emotion at this news. With impressive tranquillity he watched the flags at NATO headquarters come down to half-mast and continued his conversation from the middle of the sentence at which he had been interrupted.

While a Republican success was generally predicted, there was no reason to take for granted the idea that the Democratic Party had ceased to exist. At a large gathering in support of Israel Bonds, in the Opera House in Chicago, Adlai E. Stevenson, the governor of Illinois, listened carefully to my address. He had introduced me with eloquent phrases in which he expressed

what I felt to be an authentic historic emotion at the spectacle of Israel's renewal. I developed a friendship with him that lasted for the dozen crowded years in which he developed his remarkable political career. Much of his discourse and all his humor had a self-deprecatory tone, as if he was doubtful of his special worth. I once tried to test the general theory that "the average man" in America could not understand his speeches. I traveled in a cab in Manhattan in which the radio was blaring out Stevenson's most recent speech. The cabdriver was a man of uncouth aspect, unshaven, slovenly in dress and afflicted with the disagreeable habit of spitting through the open window and assailing other cabdrivers with four-letter words. I said, "Did you hear Stevenson's last speech?"

"Sure . . ."

I asked, "Did you understand it?"

The reply was swift: "Yeah, but the average man wouldn't understand it . . ."

Thus began a friendship that flourished while Stevenson deployed his astonishing talent for reconciling immense public respect with electoral failure. His diffidence was sustained even in conditions that should have assured him that his quality was understood in the world. Meeting him in New York during his 1952 campaign, I heard him say that he intended to "talk sense to the American people." I asked him why he had decided to end his political career at such an early stage. His laughter filled the room. His face had a peculiar capacity to pass from implacable gloom to sudden flashes of joy that lit up the human world around him.

While my mission pursued its course, Washington was beginning to awaken out of provincialism to a sense of its growing centrality. America lived intensely with its own paradox. It had come into existence as a nation in rebellion against the Old World with a strong impulse for detachment. In its heart, it wanted nothing more than, in Jefferson's words, to be "separated by Nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe," yet here it was, entangled more and more with all the international rivalries. It was developing a sophisticated political tradition. A powerful realist school was hard at work teaching Americans that a nation must respond exclusively to its self-interest. But there was always a rhapsodic element in the American character, and it was in this part of America's spiritual soil that Israel's cause could flourish.

I had come to America skeptical of its style and values and full of European prejudices. I said, half jokingly, to a Boston audience: "If your tea was what I drank out of a tea bag this morning, I'm not surprised that you threw it into the sea." More substantively I reacted against a tendency for Americans to pontificate against "appeasement." By this they meant quite correctly that Britain and France had decided to resist Hitler too late. But the United States had never intended to resist Hitler at all, and but for Germany's

declaration of war in December 1941, Britain would have followed France into subjugation. In that case, there would have been no base on which the United States could have built the immense coalition that later swept Hitlerism into defeat and disgrace.

In short time, I was captivated by the endless variety and spaciousness of America's scenes and the vivid interchange of its moods. This was the greatest union of strength with freedom that had ever lived on earth, and to become the personal recipient of American hospitality and respect was the central experience of my diplomatic years.

The changes in the leadership of the United States and in the policies of the Soviet Union after the end of Truman's presidency were a watershed for Israel. One after the other of those who had written the history of our dramatic half decade began to fade from our scene. Those who had been the architects of Israel's early structure abandoned the stage and left marks of interrogation behind.

Weizmann died in November 1952. Truman left the White House three months later, and in 1953, to general shock and surprise, David Ben-Gurion resigned his historic premiership and settled in the Negev desert at Sdeh Boker.

The lesson for me was plain. I felt that American-Israeli friendship was not yet a tradition and that it would be necessary to reconstruct the solidarities that had illuminated our early years.

Weizmann's passing was the least unexpected of these changes in the human landscape. His health, never robust, had been in rapid decline from the first moment of his presidency. Indeed, he never fully activated that office. Even the blazing successes that he recorded in his two major encounters with Truman were achieved before he assumed the presidency. The first of these kept the Negev incontestably within the Israeli map and the other enabled Truman to recover from the "trusteeship" fiasco and to recognize Israel as soon as its independence was proclaimed. The wonder of Weizmann's career, dating from the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine mandate, lay in the fact that lack of official status never prevented him, or permitted anyone else, to be regarded as the foremost spokesman of Zionism.

When the news of Weizmann's death reached Flushing Meadow, the president of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Lester Pearson of Canada, convened the General Assembly in a session of tribute. This is not the usual habit of the United Nations. Pearson understood that Weizmann represented the Founding Fathers generation in Israel and that his passing was a special landmark. Responding to Pearson's tribute to President Weizmann, I took the rostrum for a very short speech of thanks:

He led Israel for thirty years through a wilderness of martyrdom and anguish, of savage oppression and frustrated hope, across the sharpest

agony which has ever beset any family of the human race; and at the end of his days he entered into his due inheritance of honor as the first president of Israel, the embodiment in modern times of the kingly tradition which once flourished in Israel and became an abiding source of light and redemption for succeeding generations of mankind.

When I came down from the podium, Anthony Eden, who had come to the UN to take part in the Korea debate, approached me and said: "That was very eloquent. You know he was a great friend of mine."

I knew nothing of the kind. More than any other British statesman, Eden had put sharp brakes on Churchill's desire during World War II to give evidence of sympathy for Zionism. In 1944, when most ministers were attuned to the idea of partition with a Jewish state, Eden's foreign ministry had been the only focus of opposition. Neither Eden nor I in our brief exchange could have predicted how sharply and ironically our respective interests would bring our countries together in a strange, tense ordeal about the Suez Canal within four years.

On the day after Weizmann's death I received a coded message from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion instructing me to talk to Professor Albert Einstein in Princeton and to find out what his reaction would be if he were offered the presidency of Israel. I was astounded by the originality and audacity of this approach, although I knew in my heart that it would fail.

Before I could plan any action, I received an agitated phone call from Professor Einstein himself. He said that the press was already discussing the possibility of his appointment. He wished me to note that it was quite unthinkable, and he wanted me to make every effort to see that the press ceased dealing with it. There was a tone of panic in his voice. Einstein said, "I am moved by the audacity of the thought, but my rejection is firm and implacable." He added, "I know a little about nature, but hardly anything about human beings. Please, Mr. Ambassador, do whatever you can to lift the siege of journalists around my house."

I told Einstein that I fully understood and respected his position. He should, however, in return understand my inability to accept a rejection of the offer to be president of Israel in the course of a telephone conversation. "I must ask you to receive a spokesman who would seek your reaction in a more formal and dignified way." He agreed. In my letter to Einstein I wrote: "The prime minister assures me that in such circumstances, complete facility and freedom to pursue your great scientific work would be afforded by the government and people who are fully conscious of the supreme significance of your labors."

I dispatched my deputy, David Goitein, to Princeton and he returned with Einstein's written reply. Goitein was soon to become a justice in the Israeli Supreme Court, and this was almost his last diplomatic function. Einstein's reply to me made Goitein's mission worthwhile:

I am deeply moved by the offer from our state of Israel, and at once saddened and ashamed because I cannot accept it. All my life I have dealt with objective matters. Hence, I lack both a natural aptitude and the experience to deal properly with people and to exercise official functions. For these reasons alone, I should be unsuited to fulfill the duties of that high office, even if advancing age was not making increasing inroads on my strength. I am the more distressed over these circumstances because my relationship to the Jewish people has become my strongest human bond since I became fully aware of our precarious situation among the nations of the world.

I have always cherished this letter and have thought that it was worthwhile for me to elicit it from him. For Zionists, the most impressive word is "*our* state of Israel" and "*our* precarious situations among the nations of the world." Surely, the apologetic, self-effacing doctrine of Jewish assimilation has never been given a more decisive body blow than in the spectacle of the greatest Jew of this century speaking of Israel and of the Jewish people in such intimate identification.

Suzy and I were unable to attend the ceremony of Eisenhower's inauguration or to witness Truman's departure from office, since we were plunged in a personal bereavement through the death of our infant daughter, Meira, in one of those cradle asphyxiations for which no explanation has been found to this day. On the television, however, we followed the drama of Truman's departure.

There is a moving and simple dignity in the process whereby power is assumed and relinquished in the American system. As I watched the black-and-white television screen, I reflected on Truman's glittering record of influential decisions. He had decided to devastate Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons, to force Soviet troops out of Iran, to assume the responsibilities that Britain had abandoned in Turkey and Greece, to offer Marshall aid to Western and Eastern Europe, to accept the Soviet Union's rejection with serenity, to establish the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to contain Soviet expansion, to resist the North Korean invasion of South Korea, to dismiss General MacArthur for insubordination, to despise Senator McCarthy in strident terms, to recognize Israel and thus fix the parameters of the post-war Middle East, and to fight a successful election campaign that he seemed to have no chance of winning. He had many hard edges, but it is hard to withhold respect for his unexpectedly assertive use of the presidential power and for his success in securing consensus in its behalf.

I had been in the United States for five years, all of them dominated by the Truman administration. I felt that he had influenced the direction of his nation's life more profoundly than any of his predecessors. The Truman presidency is the constitutive period in the modern international system. Most of the vocabulary and conceptual habits of American thinking on

international politics became firmly embedded in the national consciousness in those years. Truman had wielded his last office without ever being obsessed by the grandeur of his status. It was precisely this lack of pretension that helped him keep his feet on the ground and his hand in touch with the common stream of his nation's life.

After listening to Eisenhower's unmemorable inauguration address with a subtle hint of skepticism on his expressive face, Truman went to Union Station, boarded a train and chugged his way back to Independence, Missouri. He didn't feel that anything was very different from when he had gone to Washington seven years before. He gathered his friends around him and played cards as he used to do in the past, and probably with the same neighbors. Nothing much had happened to him. Except that he had changed the world . . .

We had known for some time that we would have to pursue our national tasks without Weizmann and Truman. Ben-Gurion's abrupt departure was a different matter. This was an affair of choice. Ben-Gurion had every right to be tired. He was a buoyant, vigorous man who sent out sparks of energy in all directions. But since 1933, he had borne heavy responsibilities. Although he was sixty-six years old, physical strain did not seem to be the main factor in his exhaustion. His capacities and opportunities of leadership reached their highest point relatively late in life, as was the case with Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Charles de Gaulle, and others before and after him, including our own Eshkol, Golda Meir, Menachem Begin and Shamir. Behind his ritual words of parting one could sense his dissatisfaction with some elements in Israeli life. The intensity of parliamentary warfare, the fragmentation arising from the electoral system, the need to be perpetually conciliating small groups in order to maintain a coalition—all these were repellent to his dynamic nature.

The idea of Israel without Ben-Gurion's leadership had never yet dawned on Israeli minds, not even on those of his opponents. But there was no sense of permanent parting. Ben-Gurion did not actually hang a message "I Shall Return" on the doorknob, but I could not forbear, perhaps with some irreverence, to remind my friends of Metternich's reaction when he heard of the death of a famous Russian ambassador whose skill he had admired: "You say he's died? What was his motive?"

Happily, the analogy is not complete, for Ben-Gurion had many years of activity ahead, but the search for the motive of his resignation in 1953 is still alive. He will always keep posterity intrigued. One thing is certain. Nothing in him was ever exactly what it seemed. . . .

NEW REGIMES: 1953-1956

FOR FIVE YEARS, since 1947, nothing important had gone wrong. There were now four years, from 1953 to 1956, in which nothing at home or abroad seemed to go right.

Weizmann, Truman and Ben-Gurion had been the central figures in the partition breakthrough. By early 1953 their places had been filled by Yitshak Ben-Zvi, Eisenhower and Sharett. This was disconcertingly unfamiliar. Before we could grow accustomed to the new faces the clouds grew thick on our horizon. On the adversarial side of the barricade, well-known faces vanished. King Abdullah of Transjordan had been assassinated in the Jerusalem mosque in July 1951, King Farouk of Egypt was removed from office by the revolutionary officers headed by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1952, and Stalin died in 1953.

The entire gallery of leaders who had dominated the Middle East since the end of the world war was swept away by the hand of time or by the characteristic turbulence of our region. The Middle Eastern story would be written by different hands.

It was an ominous story. The Soviet Union abandoned its support of Israel in 1953. The first indication of this change came to my anxious attention in 1952, when the Soviet Union joined the Arab states in defeating a proposal for a negotiated settlement for which I had mustered majority support in the UN Political Committee. I had called this proposal a Blueprint for Peace, and it won approval in the world press. It recommended free negotiation not to be tightly bound to the November 1947 provisions that had been morally and politically weakened by Arab rejection, as well as by the war and the armistice agreements.

The negative Soviet vote was only the first vague hint of a departure from Moscow's previous support, which had been consistent during our early years. But the clouds continued to accumulate. In November 1952 the Communist government in Czechoslovakia executed party leaders, including Ru-

dolf Slansky, the secretary of the Communist Party who was a Jew but a rabid anti-Zionist. The former Czech foreign minister, Walter Clementis, with whom I had worked in the UN, also went to the gallows. An Israeli left-wing leader, Mordechai Oren, was implausibly accused of subverting Czechoslovak security. He was later released. His trial had served as an occasion for vicious propaganda against Zionism and Israel.

In January 1953, a worse blow fell. The Soviet Union arrested several Jewish doctors and accused them of diabolically seeking to murder Soviet leaders. The ugliest forms of anti-Semitic agitation accompanied this judicial farce, which turned out to be one of the death throes of Stalinism.

In response to these provocations, demonstrations took place against Soviet policies in all countries with Jewish communities. A foolish Israeli set off a bomb in the Soviet Mission in Tel Aviv. Israel's official apology was swift and patently sincere: Nothing could have served our interest less. But our expression of regret was contemptuously rejected, and the Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Israel. In other countries where demonstrators had caused damage to Soviet missions, the U.S.S.R. response had been much less extreme.

Some experts who professed to understand Soviet motives conjectured that the Kremlin's new hostility toward Israel was a response to our support of the U.S. action in Korea. I am convinced that this is inaccurate. Israel was one of dozens of countries that were far more influential than Israel in endorsing the UN role in Korea. The greater likelihood is that the change of Soviet policy reflected an intensified desire to pursue the Cold War. The Arabs were candidates for an anti-Western coalition and Israel was not. The motive for Soviet support of Israel had been the elimination of the British base in Palestine. This was achieved. It is not a Soviet habit to go on paying for a service already obtained.

I experienced no personal change in the attitude of Soviet diplomats toward me. One of them, the virulent Andrei Vyshinski, even invited me for a talk in which he explained with pedagogic care the "objective" compulsions that stood in the way of anything more than a formal Soviet relationship with Israel. The Soviet Union, he explained, was the target of United States hostility, which found particular expression in international agencies. Moscow had a prospect of winning understanding from Arab states, and no such prospect from Israel. This was because Israel depended economically on the Western powers, and economic interests, "as is well known" to students of Leninism, defined political attitudes. Therefore, added Vyshinski, "even if you wanted to give the U.S.S.R. equal weight with the United States in your calculations, it would be objectively impossible."

My contacts with Vyshinski increased in those years despite tensions between our governments. By some strange quirk of fortune I was elected as one of the vice presidents of the UN General Assembly. This seemed a strange result, since Israel at that time was being mercilessly castigated by the Security Council and the major powers for its retaliation to *fedayeen* raids.

A vice presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations is not an onerous function, but it did bring me into frequent proximity with the heads of the major powers at dinner parties and consultations. At one of these functions, having watched Vyshinski's lavish absorption of vodka, I decided to take advantage of his amiability to pose a question: "Tell me, Andrei Andreyevitch, why don't you let the Soviet Jews emigrate? What does it really matter to the Soviet Union?"

His reply: "What are you talking about? If the Jews leave, everybody will want to leave!"

The next morning, in the cold light of sobriety, he sought contact with me very early and said anxiously: "I hope you understood that yesterday was joke." Then with great formality, "Since was only joke I assume Your Excellency did not send telegram . . ." I left him in suspense for a castigatory moment and assured him that My Excellency had not cabled his heretical words. Siberia receded from his horizon.

Egypt was no exception to the wind of change that was blowing many a leadership away in the early months of 1953. The Egyptian monarchy was overthrown and a "revolutionary" regime under General Naguib, and later Colonel Nasser, had been instituted. There would now be a competition between the superpowers for the favors of the new regime. My own inclination had been to look with a measure of hope on the young revolutionaries. During my years in Cairo I had not developed any sympathy for the decadent regime of the repulsive monarch, King Farouk, and his courtiers. It was soon apparent, however, that Nasser would give priority to an Arab constituency and that militant anti-Zionism would be the main component of his Arab and domestic strategy.

The winds that blew on Israel from the West were less harsh, but far from consoling. The Eisenhower administration, which had taken over from Truman in January 1953, did not drastically change anything in American-Israeli relations. The economic support that was then the main element of United States-Israel cooperation continued to flow. But Washington announced a "New Look," thus equating the Middle East with the lengthened hemlines featured in the fashion industry. In an effort to win Arab smiles, the administration avoided the traditional rhetoric of friendship with Israel. In October 1953, when we were agonizingly harassed by Arab assaults on frontier villages and by interference with Israel's irrigation projects in the north, the United States joined in heavy condemnation of Israel's reprisals, especially after a raid at Kibya, which most of Israeli opinion also regarded as excessive. Over sixty Arabs, many of them women and children, were killed. Reprisal raids at that time were assigned to a special formation called "Unit 101," under the command of Colonel Arik Sharon.¹ The army had never

¹Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars* (New York: Random House), 1982, p. 120.

concealed its responsibility for these actions, which were taken in response to attacks by *fedayeen* terrorists. On this occasion, however, Ben-Gurion had instructed me to explain that the raid was undertaken not by the Israeli army but by enraged settlers. Nobody could possibly believe this preposterous story, nor would it have brought any credit to Israel if it were believed. I solved the problem by taking the telegram and saying at the Security Council, "I have received the following telegram from my government," and then declaiming the text.

In the same month, when Israel refused to halt its development work at B'not Ya'akov in the northern demilitarized zone, the United States suspended its grants in aid—only to renew them a few weeks later under indignant public pressure in America.

I experienced an unusual hour of satisfaction when an emissary of Secretary Dulles's, Assistant Secretary Henry Byroade, came to New York, where I was attending a meeting of the UN General Assembly, to ask me urgently to accept the renewal of the suspended aid and to announce this before the mayoral election in New York City. I overcame a mischievous instinct to reply with a lordly refusal to accept the proffered millions. This, however, would not have served my cause with our Finance Ministry. If one wants to be excessively dignified, it is advisable not to be insolvent.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Israel and Arab states in the summer of 1953. He called me to the State Department soon after his confirmation to tell me that he would give priority of attention to the Arab-Jewish conflict. He began with Cairo, where he distinguished himself by offering a silver revolver to President Naguib on behalf of President Eisenhower. He did not indicate the direction in which he wanted Egypt to point this weapon and the symbolism did not sit well with the Israeli leaders whom he met the next day—and to whom he offered no gift except an abundant quantity of advice. On his return to Washington he apprised me of his conclusions. These were not all adverse to Israel, but he hinted that Israel should offer boundary concessions to Egypt and Jordan as the price of a peace settlement, which these two Arab governments showed no signs of desiring. He did not seem to understand that Egypt and Jordan wanted slices of our territory without wanting peace.

Although the new rulers in Moscow made some impressive gestures of conciliation, such as the acceptance of the Austrian State Treaty, the conclusion of an armistice in Korea and the resumption of relations with Israel, Eisenhower and Dulles saw nothing but an intensification of danger to the United States from what they called "world communism." They attached high priority to thwarting the aged Winston Churchill's ambition to probe the real intentions of the post-Stalin leadership in the Kremlin. Like most of my colleagues in the Washington diplomatic corps, I could not understand what harm could arise from such an exploration by the world's senior statesman. My impression was not that the Eisenhower administration feared that a Churchill initiative would reveal a negative trend in the Soviet Union. They

feared that the Soviet leadership might reveal a more pragmatic face and thus undermine the faith of the American people in the theology of the Cold War. This had implications for Israel. I believed then, and continually thereafter, that Israel had nothing to gain from American-Soviet rivalry and that an intense Cold War environment would always make Israel's position precarious.

After the tremors in Washington and Moscow in 1953, Israelis had less confidence than before about their place in the world. Israelis have always been prone to interpret any sign of coolness from its friends as abandonment or even betrayal, and Jewish history explains, if it does not justify, an excessive sensitivity about what non-Jews think of us.

The domestic situation augmented our gloom. Immigration had dwindled to 11,000 in 1953. More Jews were leaving the country than were entering it. Israel seemed to be evoking a diminished resonance in the world.

All in all, it could not be said that Ben-Gurion was handing the country over to his successor in a prosperous condition. Sharett was inheriting what I called "a beehive without honey." His difficulties were compounded by a visible lack of authority. Ben-Gurion had spoken of retirement "for a year or two," but it was not much of a "retirement." During his residence in the Negev at Sdeh Boker, Ben-Gurion exercised strong influence on his party, on many ministers and on leading army officers. And, in the manner of strong leaders, he generated a subtle atmosphere of skepticism around his successor. Thus an air of transience pervaded the Sharett government from the first day to the last. For the first time, the prime minister was not also the minister of defense. Both positions had previously been held by Ben-Gurion. Sharett, as prime minister, now was the foreign minister, while defense went to Pinchas Lavon.

Lavon was energetic and strong minded, but of bitter, contentious disposition. He came to his office with a pacifist reputation, which he strove to live down by proposing ferocious reprisals after every Arab provocation and by defiant attitudes to the outside world. I found it impossible to establish anything except a cold, formal relationship with him. He gave no deference to Prime Minister Sharett and lived in permanent tension with the army commanders and officials of his ministry. A frosty air flowed among Ben-Gurion, Sharett and Lavon. None of the three had any respect for the other two. The country incurred all the defects of a prime minister's resignation without the balancing advantages of a new, stable leadership.

The year 1954 opened ominously with a Soviet veto in the Security Council on a plan enabling Israel to carry out a development project at B'not Ya'akov on the Syrian-Israeli boundary. There was no objective reason for this. No harm to Syria's interests was involved in the compromise worked out by an ingenious UN representative. My own efforts to win Andrei Vyshinski's understanding of our position had ended with his genial exhortation to me to "settle it all with Syria directly."

This first Soviet veto had a significance far beyond its particular context.

From that day on, the UN Security Council would be closed to Israel as a court of appeal or redress. Arabs could kill Israeli citizens across the border, blockade Israel's Red Sea port of Eilat, close the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping, send armed groups into Israel for murder and havoc, and decline to carry out crucial clauses of the armistice agreements in the certainty that the Security Council would not adopt even the mildest resolution of criticism. Sometimes the veto was actually used by the Soviet Union against majority resolutions. At other times, the very anticipation of it prevented the majority from submitting texts that would give any support to Israel's interests. The jurisprudence of the United Nations thus came to imply that Arab governments could conduct warfare against Israel, while Israel could offer no legitimate response.

On September 1, 1951, I had won a diplomatic victory for Israel by persuading the Security Council to condemn all maritime interference or claims of active belligerency against Israel as "inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Egyptian-Israeli armistice agreement." The Soviet Union had not obstructed that judgment; its abstention was almost its last gesture of relative goodwill toward Israel. But the blockade continued. Egypt refused to take any notice of the Security Council's Resolution of 1951. Now, in 1954, the Soviet Union vetoed our complaint that the Arabs were winning recognition for the doctrine that all resolutions of international agencies were binding on Israel, but not on themselves.

It was not only a question of political discrimination. There were practical effects of the most tragic kind. The Arab governments had resolved, without risking total war, to drive Israel out of its mind by a constant torment of piecemeal violence. The crisis over the B'not Ya'akov project had arisen only because Syria opened fire to stop Israeli development work. It was easier for the United Nations to order the suspension of the Israeli work than to order the cessation of the Arab fire.

In his report to the Security Council on September 7, 1954, the Canadian General E. L. M. Burns, who had become the UN chief of staff, predicted that incidents on the Jordan-Israel border could spread "like brush fire." He added that "marauding into Israel by armed gangs is serious," but "Israeli retaliation by armed raids is a dangerous remedy." The United States was using a similar formula: Infiltration from Jordan constituted a serious problem, but Israel's "apparent policy of armed retaliation had increased rather than diminished tension along the armistice lines."

Whether there would really have been less tension if Israel had sat back and let its citizens be killed without "armed retaliation" is moot. Since no such bizarre experiment in national masochism has ever been tried in any country, we shall never know the answer. The crux of the matter was that an urgent problem existed and no solution was at hand.

After our disastrous Kibya raid in October 1953, I had obtained the Israeli Cabinet's support for proposing a review of the Armistice Agreement with

Jordan in accordance with Article XII, which stipulated that if after a year (from March 1949) either signatory asked the secretary-general to convene a conference with the other party to review or revise the agreement, attendance was mandatory. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld turned to Amman, received a refusal to attend the "mandatory" conference—and there the matter ended.

So the Security Council was blocked by veto, the Mixed Armistice Commissions condemned reprisals and provocations with equal voice, and a review of the agreement was illegally refused. It was at this stage that many of us began to wonder if we had any deterrence except armed response.

This was tried on a local level with no good effect. The most drastic Israeli action was at Gaza in February 1955. There had been incursions into Egyptian territory, and Egypt had been condemned by the Mixed Armistice Commission twenty-six times. The Israeli riposte at Gaza left thirty-eight Egyptian and eight Israeli dead. Sharett, who had approved this operation, said that this was a larger number of Egyptian casualties "than had been intended." I never considered that it would be possible to maintain a credible quota system in estimating the human consequences of a military operation.

The armistice system was approaching a dead end. It had been founded on a basic contradiction between the intentions of its signatories. Israel had regarded it as the end of the war and as a virtual peace settlement in embryo. It therefore stressed those provisions in the agreement that gave a hint of stabilization and finality. The Arab governments saw the armistice as a temporary phase in a continuing war that had never been renounced. They therefore placed their accent on the provisional and noncommittal spirit of some formulations, especially on the boundary question. The major powers and the United Nations began with strong support of the Israeli interpretation of the armistice agreements as stable international contracts; but as a result of Arab pressure Eden, Dulles and even Hammarskjöld began to speak of the 1949 lines as though they had no durable legitimacy. Thus the political force of the armistice agreements was undermined at the very time that their security provisions were being disrupted by daily violence.

From his voluntary "exile" in Sdeh Boker, Ben-Gurion was urging young Israelis to abandon the cities and even the kibbutzim in order to settle the Negev. Suzy and I visited him on several occasions at his desert home. It was a somewhat surrealistic experience. His residence was a small wooden hut, crowded with books and papers, and nearly always frequented by politicians or foreign visitors. The politicians were in quest of directives about how to conduct the country while evading any subordination to the will of the incumbent prime minister. The foreign visitors were attracted both by the idea of an interview with the real center of power and by the paradox of Ben-Gurion's ostensibly austere circumstances. He rejected air-conditioning for some time in order to establish his status as an "equal" member of the kibbutz. He himself was totally immune to the seductions of personal com-

fort, but he was shielded from real austerity by the protective ministrations of his wife, Paula, who fed him on Tel Aviv delicacies while offering his and her guests the barely edible but plentiful fare of the kibbutzniks. Paula regarded her husband's movement to Sdeh Boker as an offense to her central human interests and she filled the air with expressions of outrage formulated in Brooklynese English, with an admixture of Yiddish imprecations describing her illustrious husband as "meshuggc" for coming to "this place." She would then embark on nostalgic descriptions of the family home in Tel Aviv, which she painted in poignantly palatial terms as if it were an immense distance away, like Jerusalem in the memory of the exiles in Babylon. Having listened in emotional sympathy to these tirades we would find Paula the following day in Tel Aviv, quite often with Ben-Gurion himself in residence for the purpose of plunging into the opulent riches of his immense library.

If Ben-Gurion's intention had been to attract masses of young Israelis away from urban indulgence toward the asperities and challenges of the Wild South, his gesture could not be adjudged as a great success. The demographic relationship between the populous Tel Aviv area and the open spaces of the Negev remained depressingly constant, despite the encouraging growth of Beersheva, which Ben-Gurion did not regard as sufficiently southern to be graded as genuinely pioneering country. But the didactic influence of his "flight" to the Negev was not negligible. He was illustrating the theme that Israel was still a half-empty country, with no real need of annexing Arab-populated areas. He also stressed the theme that the ennobling devotions of Zionism were giving way prematurely to a measure of hedonism. His message to Israeli youth was "if you insist on living in cities, at least feel guilty about it."

Ben-Gurion's awkward self-imposed exile came to a close in February 1955 when Lavon ended his uneasy reign at the Ministry of Defense. Lavon had reacted almost hysterically to the aggravation of Israel's solitude. He interpreted the agreement for the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal area, under a new treaty with Egypt, as a dangerous body blow to Israel. There was now no non-Arab force between Israel and its most powerful and hostile neighbor. This was an exaggerated reaction. While the British forces were in the Canal Zone their presence had brought little comfort to Israel. I recalled the incident in December 1949 when British aircraft had actually intervened against Israel in an air clash in which five British planes had been shot down. The British occupier had not managed to secure Israel's right of free passage in the Suez Canal. We had no complaint on this matter since the British force was severely limited in its function by the dictates of Egyptian sovereignty. Moreover, I felt the paradox in our position. Here was Israel, who had fought arduously against British occupation of Palestine, weeping bitterly because neighboring Egypt had decided by peaceful contract to do what we had done by armed struggle! It looked as if we were in favor of all countries being occupied by foreign forces except our own. It had been

because of my sensitivity on this point that I had voted against a continuation of British tutelage in Libya in the General Assembly vote of 1948.

Lavon's nervousness was reflected in the organization of a complex Intelligence network in Egypt, involving both Israelis and Egyptian Jews. In an ill-conceived operation known in Israeli folklore as "The Mishap," these agents had blown up British and American civilian buildings, including cinemas and restaurants in Cairo, in the hope that these assaults would be regarded by the U.S. and Britain as symptoms of Egyptian hostility to the West. The "logic" was that in that case the West would decide not to leave the Canal Zone and would act punitively against Egypt. The tragic consequence was that some Egyptian Jews were executed in Cairo and others were imprisoned for agonizingly long periods.

The question whether Lavon had given the order for this folly or whether, as he alleged, the order had been given without authorization by Intelligence chiefs, acting under the inspiration of Lavon's enemies, was to agitate the Israeli political system for many years and would in the course of time bring about Ben-Gurion's final resignation in 1963. It was evident that against this background and in the light of the distrust with which Lavon was seen both by Ben-Gurion and Sharett, there was no course except for Lavon to resign from the Cabinet. Ben-Gurion was back, if not at the helm, at least in an influential position as defense minister.

I was able to escape from my struggles in Washington for a week in April when I went to San Francisco for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations. The associations of the place were very moving. I recalled the day in Jerusalem when I saw a picture in the newspapers of the 1945 meeting and observed that every nation sat behind its name and flag except the one nation that had suffered most from the assaults of Nazi barbarism. There was a stir in the hall when I opened my speech with the words: "Ten years ago we were not here. Our absence revealed the deep chasm of weakness and disaster into which we had fallen."

Amid the intersecting encounters I used the gathering to explore some new contacts. A great deal goes on in international assemblies behind the scenes. Indeed, the chief value of scenes lies in what can be done behind them.

I visited British Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan, who invited me for what he called "a drink," which turned out to be several drinks for him and one tepid, weak whisky and soda for me. He ruminated in a rich Edwardian accent as though he were doing an exaggerated imitation of himself. Everything about him was easy, languid and self-confident. He had the disconcerting habit of appearing as if he could only avoid going to sleep with great difficulty by keeping his eyes open with intense ocular effort, but when I left him and weighed up what he had said, everything was coherent and in place. The general trend of his utterance was in praise of Zionism. Had not Winston Churchill and Leopold Amery been among his mentors and friends? It was

only later that I came to discern the deep strain of social compassion that hid behind the conservative facade.

More exacting was a luncheon party that Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov of the Soviet Union gave in honor of our delegation. Before the convivial part of our meeting, I had a talk with him for an hour and a half. There was a legend that nobody had ever seen him smile, and I was curious to know if this was true. I left him a few hours later with the legend intact. He had given notice to me that he did not speak or understand English and that I should bring an English-language interpreter. I decided that if I was to talk a language that he did not understand, it might just as well be Hebrew. Accompanied by our erudite legal counselor, Dr. Jacob Robinson, I arrived at Molotov's headquarters and began my Hebrew remarks. I had not gone very far when he interrupted me: "What exactly is the language you are talking? I've listened carefully and it sounds nothing like Yiddish. I know, because my wife speaks Yiddish."

After the necessary philological clarification we went on to our business. He was plain and blunt. His information was that the United States was going to get Israel to sign a defense treaty. This would be a tragic development; the central aim of Soviet policy was to avoid being encircled by American and other imperialist bases. The Soviet Union had helped Israel come into existence in the hope that it would never lend itself as a base for the hostile actions of one power against the other.

The idea that Eisenhower and Dulles were ardently pursuing Israel as a partner for their defense pacts was too painful an irony for me to sustain. I could see, however, that Soviet policymakers were in earnest. They cared little how Israel voted and not much about what Israel would do in the UN. They would maintain a correct, if not a cordial, official relationship. They believed that Israel's statehood was immutable. They had a quarrel with our policies, not with our existence. The only serious thing they asked of us was that we should resist the blandishments of American policymakers, who were trying hard to conclude a military alliance with us.

When we sat down to the table, Molotov and the other Soviet diplomats with him seemed to be concentrating their most suspicious gaze upon me, as if to probe whether I had been negotiating defense alliances with the United States between drinks and the first course. It was decided that at the dinner there would only be toasts, no speeches and no political remarks. Molotov's toast was "to the government and people and delegation of Israel, health and prosperity—and please do not sign defense pacts with the United States."

In a year in which there were few consolations, we had to draw some comfort from the fact that we had access to all the Great Powers and could hold discourse with them. France had spent two years almost totally concentrated on its predicaments in Tunisia and Morocco. This created both a sense of detachment and an atmosphere of sympathy. French prime ministers had come twice to Washington and stayed at Blair House, where they received me

for discussions in which they revealed their distaste for U.S. policies. By coincidence, they were both Jews: Pierre Mendès-France at the height of his prestige after the Indochina conference and the Tunisian settlements, and later René Mayer, who had agreed to attend a seder in our residence but had been recalled to Paris for one of his parliament's recurrent crises.

Until 1955 the American "New Look" had been expressed mainly in reluctance to articulate the importance of the U.S.-Israeli relationship. It was possible for Israel to live with this somewhat ungracious posture. But it never occurred to me that a massive infusion of Soviet arms into Arab states at levels and quantities that would shatter the balance of forces in the Middle East would be greeted by Washington with nothing but a friendly warning to us "not to worry." Yet this was precisely the reaction of the United States and Britain to the announcement of an arms transaction agreed upon between Egypt and Czechoslovakia, under Soviet inspiration. Aircraft, tanks and guns of a destructive capacity hitherto unknown in the region would now pour into Egypt at a rate beyond all previous experience. We saw ourselves faced with strategic dangers far greater than those involved in the daily border attacks.

The bottom had clearly been knocked out of our security balance. It was the Jewish New Year when a messenger brought me the news of the Egyptian-Czech arms deal to the Adas Israel Synagogue in Washington. My thoughts strayed away from prayers for the distant future toward concern for the immediate present.

The criticism of Western policy that I now developed was not that it failed to prevent Soviet penetration, but that it neglected the measures by which the effects of that penetration might have been counteracted. What was now needed was a show of Western strength to demonstrate that the Middle East was not going to become a Soviet preserve. And in relation to Israel, there was a need to maintain stability by a modest reinforcement of Israel's armaments and a stronger support of the armistice lines as internationally recognized boundaries that must be carefully safeguarded until they were replaced by a new agreement. Neither of these courses was taken.

The first link in the chain leading toward explosion was the Baghdad Pact of February 24, 1955. This was a "pact of mutual cooperation" between Iraq and Turkey, linked to an earlier treaty between Turkey and Pakistan. Britain and Iran joined in 1955. The United States did not formally adhere to the Pact, but its spiritual father was John Foster Dulles and the main support in arms and money came from the United States. This was part of Dulles's policy of containing Soviet expansion by contractual deterrents that would prevent Soviet penetration of the Middle East.

Nasser was violently offended by what he interpreted as an effort by Washington and London to divide the Arab world into rival blocs corresponding to the East-West division. His position as the leader of the Arab world was being challenged. He responded by a vehement anti-Westernism.

He pressed for the overthrow of pro-Western regimes in Baghdad, Amman and elsewhere and strengthened his links with Moscow.

All that eventually remained of the Baghdad Pact was its negative effect on Israel. Dulles explained to me that by involving Arab states in a "northern tier" defense against Soviet expansion together with non-Arab states, like Iran and Turkey, he would be substituting communism for Zionism as the major foe of the Arabs and would divert Arab preoccupation from the Israeli issue. It was hard to listen to such talk without violation of courtesy. The idea that Arab emotional priorities could be changed by signing documents and creating institutions revealed an obsessive legalism and a lack of understanding of Middle Eastern history and culture.

Israel had an acute sense of exclusion and solitude. Arab states were being rearmed under defense pacts with the major powers, while Israel had neither an assured source of arms nor any international support of its security and integrity. All I could do was to stimulate the growth of American public opinion against this folly. On a CBS "Face the Nation" program at the end of February, I tried to put the matter in simple terms:

British tanks to Egypt; American tanks to Saudi Arabia; British planes and tanks to Iraq; British planes and tanks to Jordan; American arms to Iraq; Soviet bombers, fighters, tanks and submarines to Egypt; and no arms for Israel. Bombers to Egypt to terrorize our cities? Yes. Fighters to Israel to help ward off those perils? No.

What kind of policy is this . . . ?

There was a strong resonance to this interview, and the Eisenhower administration took it seriously. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Murphy, a genial man, said to me: "The Secretary thinks that this was a pretty strong criticism from an ambassador—against the government to which he is accredited . . ." It was the only occasion on which I ever received even a low-key warning about my appeals to American public opinion.

The fear that Israel's security was being compromised to a horrifying degree was not merely a subjective "complex" of Israelis. Anxious support for Israel came from an unexpected source. One day in April 1955 our information officer in the consulate in New York, Reuven Dafni, called me to say that Albert Einstein had written to express deep consternation at Israel's plight. He suggested that we meet to discuss how he might help. I made my way to Mercer Street in Princeton with Dafni. Einstein opened the door to us himself. He was dressed in a rumpled beige sweater and equally disheveled slacks.

He came straight to the issue. He said that the radio and television networks were always asking him for interviews, which he always refused. He now thought that if he had some "publicity interest," he might as well use it. Did I think that the media would be interested to record a talk by him to the

American people and the world? I exchanged glances with Dafni, as if to say that this was the newspaperman's dream. Einstein took out a pen, dipped it in an old-fashioned inkwell and began to scratch some sentences on a writing block. We soon decided that he needed more time and arranged for Dafni and me to come and help him with the formulation of the text another day. Einstein courteously asked if we would like some coffee. Assuming that he would get a housekeeper or maid to produce the beverage, I politely accepted. To my horror Einstein trotted into the kitchen, from which we soon heard the clatter of cups and pots, with an occasional piece of crockery falling to earth, as if to honor the gravity theory of our host's great predecessor, Newton.

Arrangements went forward in Dafni's energetic hands for Einstein's planned television address, which was to be nationwide. But when Dafni and I were to meet him we were told that the professor had been taken to the hospital. A few days later he died. Among his papers were found the handwritten pages that he had prepared for the opening of his address. It began:

I speak to you tonight as an American citizen and also as a Jew and as a human being who has always striven to consider matters objectively.

His unspoken text went on:

What I am trying to do is simply to serve truth and justice with my modest strength. You may think that the conflict between Israel and Egypt is a small and unimportant problem. "We have more important concerns," you might say. That is not the case. When it comes to truth and justice there is no difference between small and great problems. Whosoever fails to take small matters seriously in a spirit of truth, cannot be trusted in greater affairs. . . .

The extract breaks off after a few reflections on the Cold War, which made it plain that Einstein held Soviet and U.S. policy in equal criticism.

We shall never know how Einstein proposed to end his appeal on Israel's behalf. At a crowded memorial to Einstein in Carnegie Hall on May 14, 1955, the seventh anniversary of Israel's independence, I said:

He saw the rebirth of Israel as one of the few political acts in his lifetime which were of an essentially moral quality. . . . When he felt the cold wind of Israel's insecurity, he apprehended that something very precious was being endangered, and at that moment he fell into a deep, responsible and active preoccupation with Israel's future which brought me to him in the final days of his life, in encounters which I shall always cherish, recalling the warm and proud Jewish solidarity which enriched his discourse and endowed it with undying grace.

By this time the pressure on Eisenhower and Dulles to do something effective about Israel's declining balance of power was coming loudly from the American public, and not only from the Israeli embassy. Dulles's resistance to our arms request was beginning slowly to erode. At a dinner in Washington he had said cautiously that the United States had an obligation to prevent Israel suffering from "an imbalance" of arms. Later that month he confessed his dilemma to me with candor. He said that he was now convinced that the needs of equilibrium required Israel to receive some modern jet fighters and other arms. On the other hand, if the United States supplied them directly, it would be under irresistible pressure to open a supply relationship with Arab states. The question was whether Israel could get what she wanted from somewhere else. I replied that this was not possible, since the fighters that we sought were manufactured only in the United States and Canada.

On hearing the word "Canada," which I had mentioned only in routine pursuit of accuracy, Dulles seemed to spring to attention, as if he had suddenly stumbled on an unexpected treasure. The doodling on a yellow pad and the nervous twitch of eyes and mouth abruptly ceased. He said with contrived casualness that Lester Pearson, the foreign minister of Canada, was in Washington that very day. I could not understand why he was telling me about his schedule. After all, foreign ministers were coming in and out of Washington almost every hour. Dulles said that some American F-86s were manufactured on license in Canada but were nevertheless at the disposition of the United States.

A few hours later I called the Canadian embassy, where Ambassador Arnold Heency informed me that Dulles had asked Lester Pearson to make twenty-four F-86 jet fighters available to Israel out of the American quota production line!

There now began an extraordinary period of equivocation in which the United States pressed Canada and France to do that which it wanted to avoid doing itself. From my point of view, this was better than nothing at all, but I could well understand the resentment in Paris and Ottawa. I also thought there was something rather childish in the exercise. It would not be beyond the wit or resource of the Arab governments to learn the active role of the United States in producing this equipment for Israel. In fact, as we expected, the Canadian government, when it decided to give its authorization in September 1955, stipulated that the United States should let it be known publicly that this was being done at America's behest.

As if this situation were not enough of a burden on Israel's jangled nerves, there now came another element in the nation's discomfiture: a resolute attempt by two of the Western powers to press Israel for territorial concessions.

The United States' move came in August 1955, when Secretary Dulles made a major policy speech in New York. It later became evident that he was

trying to forestall the Soviet arms transaction by sending out signals to Egypt of American support for territorial concessions by Israel. Dulles's speech did not ignore Israel's security problem. He even held out the possibility of the United States entering into formal treaty engagements guaranteeing the boundaries of Middle Eastern states. Ben-Gurion said that the very fact that Dulles had mentioned the words "a security treaty with Israel" was historic. But Dulles had added:

If there is to be a guarantee of borders there should be prior agreement upon what the borders are. The existing lines . . . were fixed by the Armistice Agreements of 1949. They were not designed to be permanent frontiers in every respect.

He went on to advocate the fixing of permanent boundaries, and in a clear allusion to the Negev Desert, he added: "The difficulty is increased by the fact that even territory which is barren has acquired a sentimental significance."

Nothing could have irritated Israelis more than the reference to the Negev as having "only" sentimental significance. For Ben-Gurion in particular, the Negev, more than any other area, symbolized the Zionist vision of conquering the wasteland and avoiding encroachment on Arab-populated areas. The general tendency to associate diplomacy with the idea of tact had never been communicated to Foster Dulles, despite his diplomatic lineage.

If Israel had been disturbed by American "hints" on the status of its frontiers, it was even more shocked by the speech of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden at the Guildhall on November 9, 1955. In more forthright language than that used by Dulles, Eden called for "a compromise between the boundaries of the 1947 UN Resolution and the 1949 armistice lines." In simple terms, it became evident that London and Washington favored Israeli concessions in the Negev to Egypt and Jordan, to enable them to establish a "land-bridge" to each other without passing through non-Arab territory. For Israel this was tantamount to the loss of its exclusive control of the Negev, which had been the main benefit secured in the political struggles of 1947-1949. In the Knesset on November 15, Ben-Gurion firmly rejected Eden's offer to mediate on this basis, since it was designed "to truncate the territory of Israel for the benefit of her neighbors" and therefore had "no legal, moral or logical foundation."

The Dulles-Eden relationship was abrasive, and the diminution of Israel's territory was almost their only common purpose. Our tenacity prevailed. The negotiation was delegated from the foreign ministers to a team of officials headed by Francis Russell, a member of the American foreign service, and Evelyn Shuckburgh, the senior Middle Eastern expert in the British Foreign Office. In Shuckburgh's mind the Middle East included Israel only as the result of unmitigated folly going back to Lloyd George, Churchill and Balfour and pursued against all reason by subsequent American and British

governments. The bureaucratic Russell-Shuckburgh duo produced a bizarre scheme in which Israel would yield some triangles of territory in the Negev in a geographic pattern that would maintain Israeli communication to the Negev at one point and create Egyptian-Jordanian contiguity at the same point, presumably by an overpass highway. Neither Eden nor Dulles was distinguished by a sense of humor, but they speedily discarded this plan and pretended for some years that it had never happened. It lives on in the archives under the name Alpha. Neither government ever explained why the United States and Britain should wish to create contiguity between Egypt and Jordan, the effect of which would be to establish Nasser's domination of the entire Arab world, beginning with Cairo's control of Jordan.

I have never discovered what Operation Beta was, if it ever existed, but from early January, I was much occupied with Gamma. This was an operation conceived by President Eisenhower for exploring the possibility of an understanding between Nasser and Ben-Gurion. It was a far more rational and, at one stage, hopeful project than the ludicrous Alpha. The idea was to send a presidential envoy to Cairo and Tel Aviv in an effort to induce Nasser to meet Ben-Gurion in secret with no formal agenda except to seek a convergence of interests. The chosen emissary was Robert B. Anderson, a Texas businessman who had served as secretary of the Navy and would eventually become secretary of the Treasury.

Eisenhower sent identical letters to Nasser and Ben-Gurion introducing Anderson as "my good and trusted friend" and requesting the two leaders to "go over with you and others some of the various serious problems of the area which concern you, your neighbors and the free world generally."

I met Anderson together with Reuven Shiloah and Teddy Kollek, who was Ben-Gurion's most intimate and trusted adviser. I recall wondering whether Nasser would enjoy being associated with Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion as members of the "free world," but I felt that this was not my problem. I reacted approvingly to one particular aspect of this initiative: the emissary was not charged with any documentary definition of his assignment. For years before and since, there has been a tendency, unique to this dispute, to haggle about UN resolutions or declarations of principle without which the parties would not come together. Pre-negotiation has taken so much time that little negotiation has taken place.

I found Anderson to be an easygoing, reticent man capable of reaching personal contact with people at first meeting. He traveled between Cairo, Jerusalem and Washington from January to March 1956. He had two aims. One of them was to achieve a Ben-Gurion-Nasser meeting. The other was to persuade the two leaders to accept U.S. mediation if a direct meeting turned out to be impractical. Ben-Gurion flatly rejected mediation because the ground had been spoiled in advance by American and British efforts to secure specific territorial modifications at Israel's expense. He was affronted by the idea that any part of the territory within the 1949 armistice boundaries was

in the nature of occupied territory of undefined status. Another reason for our opposition to a prolonged Anderson mission was that the U.S. made it plain that the ban on arms sales to Israel would be frozen as long as the mission was active.

Our rejection of American mediation seemed likely for a time to provoke a crisis in our relations with the United States. The opposite occurred, and once again Israel was released from trouble by its adversary. During the three months of the Anderson mission, Nasser was cultivating an image of hostility to American interests all over the world and was undermining regimes in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, which sought cooperation with the West. He reached the conclusion that Nasser could not be relied on for any compromise with Israel, with or without a direct meeting. In his diaries, President Eisenhower summed up the Anderson mission in cogent words:

Nasser proved to be a complete stumbling block. He is apparently seeking to be acknowledged as the political leader of the Arab world . . . The result is that he finally concludes he should take no action whatever . . . rather he should just make speeches, all of which must breathe defiance of Israel—

Eisenhower, in the same entry, described Israel as being unwilling to make any concession and as obsessed only with arms requests.

Toward the end of 1955 we decided to make a desperate attempt to project Israel's plight into the dialogue of the "Big Four" foreign ministers at their meeting in Geneva. Our targets would be Dulles (U.S.), Molotov (U.S.S.R.), Eden (U.K.) and Pinay (France). The suggestion came from Gideon Rafael, whose qualities have always included a capacity for innovation and a reluctance to allow Israeli policy to be bogged down in routine. Sharett was still the prime minister at that time, and this might be the last occasion on which he would be able to use the aura that came with the highest rank. He was linguistically equipped to talk to all four ministers without translation.

He was too realistic to expect success from his visit to Geneva, but he believed in historic duty. Even if we did not achieve anything by talking to the Great Powers at high levels, he felt that it was his obligation to exhaust every remedy.

I joined Sharett in Paris, where we had a preliminary talk with Dulles before proceeding to Geneva. Dulles was the most nomadic and mobile statesman at that time. He was unjustly accused of measuring the value of diplomatic activity in terms of air mileage, and it is only right that the Washington, D.C., airport bears his name.

In Geneva, Israel's ambassadors to the U.S., Britain, France and the Soviet Union were assembled, together with Eliahu Sasson, our Arab expert, Reuven Shiloah and Gideon Rafael. While I maintained contact with Dulles,

Sharett's meetings with Macmillan, Pinay and Molotov were held with the accompaniment of Ambassadors Elath, Yaacov Tsur and Yosef Avidar. Macmillan was bland, amiable and totally noncommittal. Molotov was unresponsive to the point of rudeness and with none of the conviviality that he had shown me in San Francisco. He recited to Sharett the same text as that which I had heard from him in April.

The Paris-Geneva foray was not a success, but it was the occasion for the first break in Israel's battle against enforced military weakness. On his way from Paris to Geneva, Sharett had obtained the promise of French Prime Minister Edgar Faure to supply *Mystère* aircraft to Israel without reference to the United States and Britain. The main activity in this field was being conducted with dynamic intensity and growing success by Deputy Defense Minister Shimon Peres, but there is no doubt that the Sharett-Faure meeting was the first stage in our emergence from the tunnel of frustration. Ben-Gurion's graceless refusal to acknowledge this achievement by Sharett would later be one of the indications that the cooperation between Ben-Gurion and Sharett was at an end.

An election was held in 1955, with Ben-Gurion in his traditional place at the head of the Labor list. He formed a government with Sharett as foreign minister. Sharett had enjoyed his status as prime minister, and the country was impressed with his efficiency. He had involved himself in a wider range of problems than the political and security issues that almost monopolized Ben-Gurion's time and attention.

But Sharett's tenure even as foreign minister was by now becoming fragile. A short time before the election, I had received a vivid illustration of the lack of human contact between the two leaders. Hearing that I was going down to Sdeh Boker to see Ben-Gurion, Sharett had asked me to discover if Ben-Gurion really intended to return to his leadership of the party and the government. I came back and said: "Yes, he is!" Sharett said "Oy!" On the rare occasions when Sharett attempted brevity, he went the whole way.

Ben-Gurion was not slow in making his resumed leadership effective. While the Egyptians were trying to make the Negev uninhabitable, the Syrians directed their fire from the eastern bank of Lake Galilee against a fishing boat in midlake. The incident took place in early December 1955. Although there were no Israeli casualties and little damage, Ben-Gurion ordered a massive attack on Syrian positions, leaving seventy-three Syrians and six Israelis dead. The scenes of carnage were horrific. This disproportionate action was criticized in Israel itself because of the unexpectedly heavy toll of Syrian casualties, and also because Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett was working with me in Washington, where we awaited a response to our request for permission to buy jet aircraft. James Reston of *The New York Times* had informed me that the response was not going to be negative. Our attack at Kinneret was inevitably followed by a deferment of the American response on our arms request.

Apart from the international consequences, which were severe but transient, this decision by Ben-Gurion was fiercely resented by Sharett. "Only the devil could have conceived such an outrage," he cried. He expressed his views to me and others in a form that could only be interpreted as a suspicion that Ben-Gurion had sanctioned or initiated the Kinneret attack for the purpose of denying Sharett a personal victory in the quest for arms.

I ignored these evidences of domestic turmoil and wrote indignantly to Ben-Gurion protesting the decision to embark on a sensational military assault in response to a minor provocation at the very moment when the United States seemed about to accept Israel's case on the arms balance.

His reply was breathtaking. "I myself thought," he wrote, "that we had made a grave mistake, but when I read your great speech in the Security Council defending my decision I concluded that we had acted correctly. I have nothing more to add . . ."

This mischievous response was the nearest that Ben-Gurion would ever come in the direction of either humor or penitence. He derived immense pleasure from narrating his response to anyone who crossed his threshold. My argument with him was about priorities. There was a conflict between the very short aim of punishing Syria and the longer-term aim of achieving a better arms balance. Ben-Gurion this time had chosen the short term.

By now the tormenting pressure of raids by Egyptian and Jordanian forces and *fedayeen* groups had taken heavy toll of our nervous energy. It also provoked deep divisions within the Israeli leadership about the scope, range and intensity of armed retaliation. Ben-Gurion and Sharett were often at variance on this issue. Even more serious was the development of independent initiatives in international policy by Defense Ministry officials, without the coordination with the Foreign Ministry that would have been natural if personal tensions between the two ministers had not become extreme.

Ben-Gurion had been encouraging his Defense Ministry to go full speed ahead with the development of Shimon Peres's remarkable links with the French Defense Ministry. In doing this without consulting Sharett he was clearly undermining the authority of the Foreign Ministry. On the other hand, Peres's cultivation of friendships in Paris may have been jurisdictionally subversive, but it was of immense value for the nation's security. The French connection was soon to flourish into two of Israel's most spectacular achievements: the development of an important armaments-manufacturing capacity that has lifted the country to hitherto unanticipated heights in technology; and the introduction of Israel into the world of nuclear research through the establishment of the Dimona reactor with French cooperation. Neighboring countries ascribe great importance to Israel's achievements in these fields, and our deterrent power has been vastly enhanced.

But the difficulties between Ben-Gurion and Sharett went far beyond quarrels over "turf." In theory, they should have constituted a balanced harmony. Each possessed some virtues and had some faults that the other lacked: Ben-Gurion was impulsive, imaginative, daring, dynamic; Sharett

was prudent, rational, analytical, realistic. Had they been able to work in close harness, an ideal equilibrium might have been achieved. But the contradictions that divided their characters also created an incompatibility of emotion. They had gone together through many of the most testing ordeals of Jewish history, each with his own temperament and character as his guide. Far from moving toward a sense of partnership, they had become unable to bear the sight of each other. Ben-Gurion thought that Sharett was talented, but pedantic, excessively meticulous, and inclined to confuse the vital with the incidental. Sharett, with all his admiration for Ben-Gurion, considered him demagogic, tyrannical, opinionated, devious and, on some occasions, not quite rational. Their complementary virtues should have been harnessed for the national interest, but their antipathies were too strong for these potentialities to be fulfilled.

By this time Ben-Gurion must also have known that he would wish to make decisions in 1956 that Sharett would be certain to contest. Each had his loyal adherents within the Labor Party, but this very fact created the danger that in the absence of a clear-cut adjudication between them, the party itself would become split into rival camps. On June 18, 1956, after many relatively polite maneuvers, Ben-Gurion had directly requested Sharett's resignation. Despite the opposition of forty percent of the party's Central Committee—an unusual scale of revolt against Ben-Gurion—Sharett made his resignation effective at the end of June and was succeeded by Golda Meir. He sent me a touching letter, full of gratitude for the support that I had been able to give him, but also charged with bitter reflections on the circumstances that had brought about his resignation.

This was to be Sharett's last appearance at the center of Israel's stage. Although he was not advanced in years by the standards of Israeli leadership, he never overcame his rancor sufficiently to assume a place in the national leadership under Ben-Gurion's authority. By the time Ben-Gurion left the scene in 1963, Sharett had already been sidetracked into the motionless waters of the Zionist Organization, with Levi Eshkol filling Ben-Gurion's place.

Sharett impressed his personality deeply on the first decades of our political struggle. He had the same zeal and single-mindedness as his distinguished contemporaries in the Israeli and Labor leadership. But what separated him from them was his reverence for correctness and symmetry of thought, his belief that statesmanship is a rational as well as a humane exercise, his disrespect for anything that was shoddy, imprecise, or still worse, morally questionable. He was a man of sharp colors and straight lines, and the very probity of his character and the constancy of his values made it difficult for him to accept the compromises needed for cooperation with a leader whom he mistrusted. He seemed unable to give some of Ben-Gurion's foibles the particular indulgence to which Ben-Gurion was entitled by the compensating weight of his virtues.

Sharett spent the next decade brooding unfruitfully on his fall from power

with no serious effort at political recuperation. In view of Ben-Gurion's growing dominance of the domestic arena, Sharett's departure may have been inevitable, but there is no doubt that with his resignation, the Israeli leadership was impoverished and the nation lost one of its ennobling dimensions. In one quality he surpassed all the leaders of Zionism and Israel—in his warm human spirit and his proud and unselfish cultivation of younger talents.

Ben-Gurion was aware that with Sharett's departure he was losing specialized skills that might be hard to replace. He asked me to come home to Jerusalem for consultation and suggested that I leave my Washington embassy to become chief adviser on foreign affairs to himself. I would thus be a kind of watchdog over the new foreign minister, Golda Meir, with a direct line of command to Ben-Gurion.

It seemed clear to me—and even clearer to Golda Meir—that this was an infallible prescription for antagonistic explosions in which Mrs. Meir and I and, perhaps, even Ben-Gurion, would be injured every day by flying splinters of jurisdictional discord. At luncheon in her house, Mrs. Meir and I agreed that we could best cooperate across the ocean, with me pursuing my mission in Washington, which, in any case, had reached such a point of cruciality that it would have been irresponsible to abandon it. Whatever status and resonance I had been able to develop in Washington and throughout America in the past six years would now have to prove their value in great ordeals. Golda and I reached unprecedented harmony by agreeing on one point: that she and I would be happy and creative in proportion to the geographic distance separating us from each other.

The political attempts of the U.S. to draw closer to Egypt had failed because Washington could not compete with Moscow in rearming Egypt without any thought of the effect on Israel's future. There was more hope in the economic field. It was thought in Washington after the Soviet arms transaction that Egypt's economic future could be linked so closely to the United States and other Western powers that Cairo would be precluded from subservience to Soviet policy. For many weeks negotiations had gone forward for the financing by the World Bank of the High Dam at Aswan, on which Egyptian planners relied for the increase of agricultural productivity in the next decades. In the spring and summer of 1956, the United States had given Egypt every reason to assume that the Aswan project depended exclusively on Egypt's readiness to accept it.

But new thoughts had arisen in Washington. Egypt was exercising hostile pressure on Israel; it was also making overt attempts to undermine King Hussein in Jordan. In addition, Nasser, especially since the Bandung Conference² of nonaligned states, had been following a Soviet direction in most

²The Bandung Conference of African and Asian states, held in Indonesia in 1955, spent much of its time and effort in attacking Israel and the United States.

international questions. He had established relations with Communist China, which was then anathema in American eyes. He was showing hostility to nearly all the aims that the United States pursued across the world. The negative remarks about Nasser in Robert Anderson's report on his mission in March 1956 had alienated Eisenhower, whose diaries contain shrewd and lucid appraisals of Nasser's character and ambitions.

Nasser had also generated antagonism to himself in the United States Congress, whose support would be needed for the appropriations that the World Bank project would demand of the American taxpayer. The Egyptian ambassador to the United States, Dr. Ahmed Hussein, had not followed this change of atmosphere; and on July 7, after returning from Cairo, he publicly announced that Egypt had "decided to accept" the help of the United States and British governments in carrying out the Aswan Dam scheme through the World Bank. He added that he intended to see Mr. Dulles in order to speed up negotiations for a financial agreement.

I was coming out of Dulles's room as the Egyptian ambassador went in. He was looking more buoyant than I expected him to be a few minutes later, since Dulles had told me of the decision to annul the Aswan Project a few minutes before the Egyptian ambassador would hear of it. In the ambassador's meeting with the secretary of state on July 19, Dulles stated bluntly that the United States did not regard American and British participation in financing the High Dam as "feasible in present circumstances." The withdrawal automatically prevented the World Bank from addressing itself to the project.

The cancellation of the Aswan Project was Nasser's first serious setback. He was no less affronted by the manner of the annulment than by the act itself. He reacted in a speech of unrestrained virulence: "Choke with rage, but you will never succeed in ordering us about or in exercising your tyranny over us!" He added: "We Egyptians will not allow any colonizer or despot to dominate us politically, economically or militarily. We shall yield neither to force nor to the dollar." He had no objection to yielding to the ruble.

Nasser was not satisfied with rhetoric alone. He looked for ways of dealing a blow at the Western world. In a speech in Alexandria on July 26, 1956, the bombshell burst. Nasser announced that the Egyptian government had nationalized the Suez Canal Company and would use the income from the Canal—about \$100 million a year—to build the Aswan Dam. Describing the Suez Canal Company as "an exploiting company" and a "state within a state," Nasser declared that it had now been nationalized "in the name of the nation" and that all its assets and commitments would pass to the Egyptian state.

No special antenna was needed to sense that we were near to war. Britain and France found themselves dependent for their major supplies, especially of oil, not on an international waterway in which they had a controlling interest, but on Egyptian goodwill, which was dubious. Preparation for

military action went forward in London and Paris. Dulles announced that Nasser must be "compelled to disgorge" what he had seized, but Eisenhower soon thereafter declared that he would oppose military action, which alone could bring the "disgorging" to fulfillment. The blatant divergence between these two signals caused confusion, and the British and French approached a decision to go it alone—and together. When the French foreign minister, Christian Pineau, declared that France would not accept the unilateral action of Colonel Nasser, the British response was unusually mild.

On July 30, 1956, Guy Mollet, the prime minister, described Nasser as an "apprentice dictator whose methods were similar to those used by Hitler, the policy of blackmail alternating with flagrant violations of international agreements." The notion that the nationalization of an economic project was equal in kind to the first phase of a cataclysmic conquest of all Europe struck me as unconvincing, but the diplomatic stereotypes were becoming deep-rooted.

Stimulated by a farfetched anti-Hitler analogy, the two European powers flexed their muscles. Both the French and British governments seemed resolved to pry the Suez Canal loose from Nasser's hands by military force.

The influence of France on Israel's policy was not solely the result of having a common adversary. In the early months of 1956, France had rescued Israel from the decline of its military strength by an unprecedentedly lavish supply of armaments. In a speech to the Knesset (October 1956), Ben-Gurion felt able to refer cryptically to the fact that Israel would soon have an "ally." When the first arms shipments from France reached Israel, the event was rhapsodically celebrated in verse by the Hebrew poet Nathan Alterman. Intimate cooperation in arms supply and political planning had already developed between the General Staffs and the Ministries of Defense of the two countries. Shimon Peres was the moving spirit in these developments.

By the time Nasser made his dramatic speech on July 26 about the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the idea that France might help Israel to resist Egyptian pressure was already familiar in some echelons of both governments. Israel was so confident of French arms supplies that in the late summer, when Secretary Dulles eventually submitted to what he called "Eban's attrition" and encouraged the release to Israel of twenty-four F-84 jet fighters manufactured in Canada under American license, the Israeli government refused to take advantage of the offer.

I was greatly irritated by this action. My fluctuating relationship with Shimon Peres had begun in a poor atmosphere. Our energetic ambassador in Ottawa, Michael Comay, had worked hard and long to secure the breakthrough enabling us to receive serious arms supplies in North America. It was shortsighted to rely on French goodwill alone. It would take a full decade before this would be confirmed by events.

Freed from Sharett's restraining hand, Israeli policy in 1956 went straight

out for short-term physical security. But France did not wish to act alone. It had despaired of any American understanding for the use of force; but it had observed the sharp upheavals in British policy created by Nasser's actions. It would not be easy to bring Britain into harmony with French and Israeli interests. For one thing, most of the pressure on Israel's borders came from Jordan, to which Britain was almost endemically attached. But Paris was confident that London was moving in its direction.

Nasser was so busy goading Israel and France into a paroxysm of hostility that he may not have observed a development in London. On October 3, British disenchantment with United States policy became complete. Secretary Dulles had made a statement in Washington to the effect that the plan to put the Suez Canal under the control of the Canal Users' Association could not be said to have had its teeth drawn, "because it never had any teeth!" Eden's conclusion was that Dulles's previous assurances to him of a determination to make Nasser "disgorge" his gains had been opportunistic and insincere. He developed a burning distrust of his American colleague, together with an urge to prove that Britain could still act independently in defense of its interests.

For the first time, there was a prospect that if Israel struck out in its own defense, it might not be alone. When one reflects on Israel's complex of solitude in the preceding years it is easy to understand the exhilarating effect of the possibility that other powers would regard an Israeli action as legitimate and salutary. This chance had become reality by the early days of October 1956. Only a year before, the Israeli Cabinet had considered a proposal for taking independent action to open the Straits of Tiran. The proposal had been rejected by Ben-Gurion, largely because Israel had no hope of support and would have been exposed to the full fury of Egyptian air attack. Now it seemed that through a strange convergence of opposing interests, the dangers of solitude might have been removed. Israel, long choked by a sense of impotence and encirclement, had a unique chance of tearing the hostile fingers from its throat.

I had no reason to be surprised by the events that reached their climax in October 1956. A full year before, I had sent Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Sharett a lengthy dispatch in which I predicted that if we were unsuccessful in gaining reinforcement and international support for our security by the early spring, we would have no rational option except to challenge Nasser militarily as well as politically. I had written:

The Soviet-Egyptian agreement is a revolutionary event in the Middle East. It involves a dangerous erosion of Western influence as well as a danger to the very existence of Israel . . . I recommend that a decision be taken in Israel in favor of a program of action of which the aim should be to weaken the Nasser regime either with our own strength or

in cooperation with Western powers. We should spend the next six months strengthening our arms to counterbalance the Arab escalation and also try for a security treaty. If this is not successful . . . and if there is no escape from a trial of force with Egypt, it will be very necessary to acquire allies and partners.

Since I was generally expected to reflect the diplomatic, nonmilitary emphasis in Israeli policy, this cable from me aroused surprise in Jerusalem. Sharett had been far from pleased. I was giving inadvertent reinforcement to currents of thought that were already alive in the Israeli establishment in the direction of a preemptive military action. It was not my intention to strengthen any particular side in a domestic controversy. But I always believed that the avoidance of a drastic change in the balance of power in favor of an expansionist dictatorship was an understandable motive for military action. I was enraged by Dulles's refusal to apply this historic logic to Israel's growing vulnerability. I have never attached any importance to the hawk-dove categorizations that are commonly applied to political leaders. To be invariably in favor of military solutions is just as absurd as to be unrealistically opposed to any use of force in situations of conflict. I have voted for and against military operations in an empirical spirit devoid of ideological or temperamental commitment to any single formula.

The Israeli government did not react to my dispatch, although every development in the region in the first half of 1956 had validated my somber conclusions. On October 14, I was surprised to receive a summons from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to fly to Jerusalem for a consultation of senior ambassadors. My assumption was that the tensions between Israel and Jordan were coming to a head as a result of the prospect that the Jordanian government would allow Iraqi troops to take up positions on Jordanian territory. This idea was officially endorsed by Britain, whose government was pledged to defend Jordan against possible Israeli attack. The United States was giving qualified acquiescence to the proposal as an insurance against Jordan's disintegration. The Jordanian excuse for the proposal was "the need to ensure stability." The real objective would of course have been to restrain Israel from reacting against infiltrations and penetrations of *fedayeen* into Israel. Ben-Gurion, after some vacillation, had replied that Israel would regard the entry even of a small Iraqi force into Jordan as a violation of the status quo and a serious threat to our security. In a talk with Dulles on the eve of my departure for Jerusalem I had deduced that the secretary was not irrevocably committed to support the plan for the entry of Iraqi forces into Jordan.

The consultation of ambassadors in Jerusalem had a somewhat bizarre quality. In addition to myself, the participants were Eliahu Elath (ambassador in London), Yaakov Tsur (ambassador in Paris) and Yosef Avidar (ambassador in Moscow), with Gideon Rafael representing the Foreign Min-

istry. The discussion centered on the problems of Iraq and Jordan, with marginal references to navigation in Suez and in the Straits of Tiran. There was also a review of our relations with Secretary-General Hammarskjöld and the UN staff in Israel. The idea of a military initiative against Egypt had no place in these discussions, although it was clear that our relations with the Nasser regime were becoming more and more tense and would soon reach a climax of hostility.

I had the strange feeling that we were participating in a charade. Ben-Gurion's motive was evidently to use the much-publicized ambassadorial meeting to focus world attention upon our eastern rather than on our southern frontier, where our real crisis lay.

During my flight by El Al on October 16, the aircraft had made a stopover in London. As I went into the transit lounge, I noticed great commotion on the tarmac. Amid great flourish of secrecy, Prime Minister Anthony Eden and Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd could be seen furtively entering an official plane, apparently en route to Paris. It was clear that whether or not their preoccupation with Iraq and Jordan was sincere, their main thoughts were focused upon the prospect of an Anglo-French confrontation with Nasser. I had wondered why I should be hurrying to Jerusalem to discuss a problem less urgent than that posed by Egyptian policy.

After the ambassadors' consultation on October 22, when I was preparing to return to Washington I received a message to see Ben-Gurion urgently. He spoke to me in a conspiratorial whisper, which surprised me since I did not assume that he was eavesdropping electronically on himself. He told me that he would travel to France that day to confer with members of the French government. There was a plan under discussion that would have "sensational results" if it came to fulfillment. Ben-Gurion was skeptical and did not really think that anything would come of it, since it involved "very complex understandings." He was convinced, he said, that the French ministers whom he would meet would recoil from the plan of action that had been discussed between Jerusalem and Paris in previous weeks. However, if it did, unexpectedly, become a real prospect I would get a little, though not much, advance notice. Looking at me closely, Ben-Gurion said: "Most of the effects would happen in your area of responsibility, probably in less than a week."

Ben-Gurion spoke only of a visit to Paris and made no allusion at all to a British involvement. Without openly confessing to have organized a charade, he gave me to understand that our meeting about the Iraqi-Jordanian scheme had an element of disinformation.

I was so deeply infected by Ben-Gurion's show of skepticism that I made my way back to Washington without any strong tension of mind or emotion. When I reached New York, my deputy, Reuven Shiloah, seemed to have surreptitious knowledge that something momentous was afoot, but he was, for a change, less up to date on events than I was.

It was a few weeks before I knew what had transpired on October 22 and

23 in Paris. Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres had gone to a villa in the suburb of Paris called Sèvres, where they had met Prime Minister Guy Mollet, Foreign Minister Christian Pineau and Defense Minister Maurice Bourges-Maunoury. They were joined by British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd. This was a sensational change of alignment, since only a few days before, British officials had been planning to make war on Israel if Israeli forces attacked Jordan with any degree of intensity. At Sèvres, the three groups of leaders decided on a grotesquely eccentric plan. Israel would attack Egypt and advance swiftly toward the Suez Canal. Britain and France would pretend to be indignant and wrathful and would issue an ultimatum calling on Israeli and Egyptian forces to retire an agreed distance from the Canal. Egypt would naturally refuse, and Britain, France and Israel would fight against Nasser. Israel would invoke the excuse of being threatened by Nasser's aggression, and the French and British governments would take the sanctimonious line that they were defending the Canal against physical danger arising from Israeli assault.

This fantasy was embodied in a written document signed by the British, French and Israeli ministers on October 23. It stipulated the degree of British involvement, since Ben-Gurion, deeply mistrustful of the British, had not credited their intention to bomb the Egyptians along the Canal in order to relieve the pressure on Israel. Anthony Eden was angry with his leading Foreign Office subordinate, Sir Patrick Dean, for having left a copy of the document in Ben-Gurion's hands. He feared that his own deceit would become exposed. It needed no exposure, since it was intrinsically transparent.

None of this was in my mind when I went to the Woodmont Country Club on Saturday, October 27. My fellow golfers were the celebrated journalist Martin Agronsky and Congressman Sidney Yates of Illinois. I had some prospect of avoiding humiliation at the hands of Martin Agronsky, who had the disconcerting habit of addressing the ball in a direction sharply divergent from where he wanted it to go, but no such hope from Sidney Yates, whose professional talent reduced me to jealous despair.

At one of the tees I was pursued by a messenger who brought the tidings that Secretary Dulles would like to consult with me at once. The need to be in close touch with his president had made Secretary Dulles something of an expert on the location of golf courses in and near the District of Columbia. I was reluctant to leave, as I was hitting the ball with greater effectiveness than usual.

Having met Reuven Shiloah at the State Department lobby, I ascended to the familiar floor, where I found Dulles and his senior officials grouped around a large map mounted on an easel. The map had the Israeli-Jordanian area at its center, with only a part of Sinai on the bottom margin. This did not surprise me. I had been receiving instructions on my return from Israel on the need to sharpen our dispute with Britain, Jordan and Iraq, and had spoken in that sense in the Security Council. I assumed that the Paris voyage

had expired in the manner predicted by Ben-Gurion, that nothing had come of it and that we were back to our more traditional preoccupations.

By October 27 the U.S. had not yet heard about the Sèvres meeting and was apparently convinced that there were two sources of crisis. One of them was focused on the British and French plan to invade Egypt. The other, in the U.S. view, was a potential operation by Israel against Jordan.

Dulles spoke to me of mobilization in Israel with massive call-ups that the U.S. ambassador in Tel Aviv, Edward B. Lawson, had described as "unprecedented." President Eisenhower wanted Ben-Gurion to know of his deep concern. Dulles swept aside all my comments on Israel's vulnerability. "What have you to worry about? Egypt is living in constant fear of a British and French attack. Jordan is weak. It is now clear that Iraqi troops are not going into Jordan. On the other hand, if your government is planning an attack, you might be thinking that the present time is suitable." ("The present time" was a code word for the U.S. presidential campaign then approaching its final day.)

I temporized with vague assurances, sent a cable to Golda Meir, received a reply that said nothing in a great many words, failed in an attempt to get telephonic connection and became convinced that the Paris voyage had borne fruit after all.

The next morning, Shiloah and I were in the office of William Rountree, the U.S. assistant secretary for Middle Eastern Affairs, emphasizing our defensive posture, when Donald Bergus, the head of the Palestine-Israeli desk, came in with a note that Rountree read aloud. It reported a massive eruption of Israeli forces around the Egyptian boundary and a parachute drop deep into Sinai. Rountree said with justifiable sarcasm: "I expect you'll want to get back to your embassy to find out what is happening in your country."

It was clear that we were at physical war with Egypt, and almost at emotional war with the United States. All contact between the embassy and the State Department was sundered. When my counselor, Yochanan Meroz, made some representation to Bergus, he received the cold reply that "the only matter to be discussed between our two governments is the evacuation of American citizens from Israel . . ."

A wave of high tension ran through Washington. Eisenhower returned from his combined election campaign and golf weekend in the South. He issued a statement to the effect that "the United States under this and prior administrations has pledged itself to assist the victim of any aggression in the Middle East. We shall honor our pledge."

The French ambassador, Hervé Alphand, told me that he knew nothing more than I did and asked where our British colleague was. I made inquiries and learned that Sir Harold Caccia, newly appointed after the departure of Sir Robert Makins, was on his way to America by sea! "Ah! the phlegmatic British . . ." said Alphand enviously. He had a right to be envious. So did I.

Washington was no place for a British (or French or Israeli) ambassador to be. *The Washington Post* thundered:

No amount of provocation can justify Israeli aggression against Egypt. It involves the most frightful risk of larger war, and it may lose for Israel the sympathy of the free world.

The American Zionist leader, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, telephoned me from Cleveland and promised solidarity and assistance. But he added his opinion that "an error of judgment has been committed even more serious than in the case of the Kinneret Operation."

Washington was on a diplomatic war footing, with generals, ambassadors and Cabinet officials in full momentum of consultation and the media in happy ferment. There was tumult in the Security Council in New York. I recalled that I was, after all, the UN ambassador in addition to all else. I drove to National Airport and routed myself to New York.

Straight from the frying pan toward the fire.

EXPLOSION AT SUEZ: 1956-1957

THE BRITISH AND French operations around the Suez Canal would be over in a few days, leaving nothing behind for military academies to study or admire. On the other hand, Moshe Dayan's achievement in bringing 40,000 Israeli troops deep into Sinai, after a daring parachute landing at the Mitla Pass, exalted Israeli morale, which had been at a very low ebb. The Israeli forces were now liberated from the congested limits of our small land and were able to conduct a campaign of movement and strategic maneuver over a broad expanse. This not only elevated their professional pride; it also sent an infusion of self-confidence into the entire nation of which they were the emissaries. The troops were human enough to contrast the swift thrust of their own advance with the hesitant, tentative, stammering pace of the British-French campaign. But Dayan was probably frank enough to admit to himself, though probably not to anyone else, that if one had to fight an Egyptian army, it would be enviable to do so with massive British and French air forces attacking the Egyptian mainland, and with Egyptian leaders giving priority to the defense of their positions in the Canal zone.

The Suez-Sinai War does not earn its fame as a military exploit. Its importance lies in the widening repercussions that it sent into international history. By mid-November, it had become evident that Britain, which had dominated international diplomacy and strategy for the best part of two centuries, was no longer capable of independent military action on a strategic scale. It would have to abandon unilateral dreams and seek its destiny in cooperation with the United States—or within the European context that both Ernest Bevin and Anthony Eden had unwisely despised. Britannia could no longer rule all the waves, or even most of them.

This reality had been latent long before 1956, but it had been partly concealed by the diversity and scope of Britain's apparent centrality, with American consent, in so many of the focal points of Middle Eastern politics. Anthony Eden's error, the greatest that any statesman can make, was to

confuse the impressive form of his nation's power with its declining substance.

France absorbed the Suez failure with greater serenity. It had the most luxurious of all French enjoyments—that of being able to blame Britain for the errors of the joint military command that lay in the responsibility of an unremarkable commander named General Sir Charles Keightly. French policy and emotion turned away from the imperial role and went into an intense, self-searching pursuit of a new constitutional order to be crowned and adorned with the return of the national hero. The de Gaulle presidency, fashioned in the tall dimensions of its incumbent, the withdrawal of France from Algeria, and its advance toward the leadership of a European Community, were the direct offshoot of the Suez drama. In all these respects, France revealed a capacity for resilience and recuperation that would have been a welcome gift to human history if they had been in effect two decades before.

Of the three adversaries that rose up against Nasser, Israel alone had a clear notion of what it was trying to achieve. At a Cabinet meeting on October 28, a minister had asked Ben-Gurion: "What is the ultimate objective of this invasion? Let us assume that it goes off as planned. Do we wish to annex the Sinai Peninsula or any part of it? And what will happen to the Gaza Strip?" Ben-Gurion had replied:

I don't know the outcome of Sinai. We are interested first of all in the Straits of Eilat (Tiran) and the Red Sea. Only through them can we secure direct contact with the nations of Asia and East Africa. The main thing is freedom of navigation in the Straits of Eilat. As far as the Gaza Strip is concerned, I fear that it will be embarrassing for us. If I believed in miracles, I would pray that it would be swallowed into the sea.

Thus, when Israeli forces burst into Sinai and Gaza on October 29, they were acting in the service of coherent and limited aims. No such clarity marked the British and French action. The central idea was to recapture the Suez Canal and establish an international regime for its management. A corollary objective was to bring about Nasser's collapse. But did London and Paris really believe that an Egyptian regime, installed by their military power, would have an effective lease on life? This was only one of the awkward questions that London and Paris chose not to face. The truth is that the British and French peoples were stirred more by emotion than by a lucid vision of their objectives. Nevertheless, in France all parties rallied to support the military resistance to Nasser.

In Britain, things were more complex. In the first flush of indignation, after Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, the Labour Party spokesmen, Hugh Gaitskell and Herbert Morrison, supported a military response. Indeed, Gaitskell was one of the first to draw the parallel between Nasser and

the dictators of World War II. Later, he and most of his party were to object vehemently to the British military action and to part company with their Israeli friends.

Eden had played the October preparations very close to his chest. He had cut off most of his ministers, the entire Foreign Office, and the United States Embassy from any normal contact with the flow of events. He was doomed very soon to crumble in failure, not only or chiefly because of American pressure, but mainly because the British Parliament never sustained him in his surreptitious action. All this, however, belonged to an unknown and rancorous future when the tensions exploded on October 29.

On that day everything had been made ready for the forward leap of Israeli forces. It began with a daring movement in which a paratroop battalion was dropped near the Mitla Pass about twenty miles east of the Suez Canal and one hundred miles beyond the Israeli boundary. Egypt's troop concentrations and fortifications were now outflanked from the rear. Israeli power had never been as far from home as this. The next task was for the main body of Israel's airborne brigade to make contact with the paratroop battalion. Our military commanders and their political chiefs were acting on the realistic assumption that international pressure would give little time for military action. Whatever could not be accomplished in a few days would have to be renounced.

The appearance of Israeli forces at Mitla stirred the Egyptians to panic. Here was the enemy at a short distance from the Suez Canal threatening the major Egyptian supply lines in Sinai. There was a fierce Egyptian counter-attack that our Mitla contingent was able to resist, but only with heavy losses. Twenty-four hours later, the Israeli offensive branched out into two directions. Southward a brigade equipped with civilian transports made its way along the western shore of the Gulf of 'Aqaba until it overran the Egyptian positions at Sharm el-Sheikh. The Red Sea was now open to Israel. We did not expect it to dry up so as to facilitate our crossing, but we looked at the incredible blue of the glittering waters and were overcome by the sense of having cast off the shackles of confinement. We were in touch with the expanse and commerce of a region from whose life and faith and tongue we had been sundered partly by their virulent resolve to exclude us.

North of Sinai there were heavy battles with casualties on both sides. Once Rafah had been taken, the Gaza Strip was cut off from contact with any Arab forces or territory anywhere. Not surprisingly, the city of Gaza soon fell with little resistance. There were some notable air battles in which Israel's French-made Mysteres came out victorious against the Soviet MIGs, causing extreme satisfaction in Paris. There were even successes at sea. The Israeli navy, such as it was, had captured an Egyptian destroyer that was sailing northward to capture Haifa. By November 5 the Israeli part of the operation—biblically named "Kadesh"—was over. We had lost 180 Israeli soldiers killed and four soldiers taken prisoners of war. We had routed the whole Egyptian

Canal force, leaving a thousand Egyptian dead. We had captured vast amounts of armament and equipment. The Egyptian forces avoided even heavier casualties only by swiftness of flight. Here was Israel, in command of most of Sinai, controlling the entry into the Straits of Tiran and, thereby, into the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

To understand the repercussions of these events and my reaction to them we must refer back to the frenzied atmosphere in the United Nations in the last days of October and the first days in November. The knowledge that I would now be personally involved at the center of world-changing events led me to keep a detailed diary, which I submitted to Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir in mid-March 1957 when the new decade of stability had begun.

Diary, October 30

Our Consulate told of a disquieting atmosphere among the Jewish leaders who were meeting in New York. They recommended full solidarity with Israel, but they were clearly embarrassed by the fact that no ground had been prepared, and that a military operation a week before the presidential election seemed somewhat anti-American. Some of them wanted to criticize President Eisenhower, his party, and his administration, thus giving their protest an undesirable political color. Since I could not leave the Security Council I sent Shiloah to a meeting of the President's Conference. From his report, I gathered that he had a difficult hour. For the first time in our history there was reluctance to justify Israel's actions without reserve. Some of them suggested that Jewish reservations about Israel's steps be openly published. In the end, however, the leader of the President's Club, Philip Klutznick, brought all of them together with an expression of solidarity for Israel and an appeal to the United States to strengthen Israel's security and Middle Eastern peace. Phil was diplomatically adept enough to avoid comment on the past and to cement solidarity for the future.

As I walked from the Security Council Chamber into the Delegates' Lounge, I was followed by a blinding flash of cameras which my public relations advisors would have deeply welcomed in previous days. I made for the French representative, Bernard Cornut-Gentille. He was dripping with perspiration, not all or most of which came from the heat. To compound the irony, he was now the president of the Security Council by virtue of alphabetical rotation. He did not seem to enjoy the experience of being both the chief justice and the prisoner in the dock. The U.S. delegate, Henry Cabot Lodge, requested the Council to take immediate measures for Israeli withdrawal to the armistice line. With a significant glare at his British and French colleagues, he asked "all members of the United Nations to abstain from extending any aid which might prolong the hostilities."

Later:

A brief, dry report from Hammarskjöld, looking angry and grim. Endless speeches by Yugoslavia, Iran, Australia, China, Cuba, Peru, the Soviet Union, and Egypt. Sobolev, with a sly surreptitious grin, quoted a news item from London about the intention of Britain and France to take military action against Egypt! Newspapermen scurried in and out between the telephones and the Council chamber.

So far, not a word had been said by Sir Pierson Dixon or the French chairman. I noticed, however, that Dixon and Lodge—of the U.S. and the U.K. whom the alphabet brought together—were ostentatiously cutting each other like school children celebrating a tiff. I went to the Chairman's seat and asked Cornut-Gentile if he had any news. He whispered: "Don't worry, my friend, there is going to be a veto." This was the first hint that reached me with the assurance that we were not alone.

4:00 P.M.—the Council resumed. I remembered Sam Goldwyn having said to his MGM executives in Hollywood: "Boys, I want a movie that begins with an earthquake and works its way up to a climax." That is what we had this afternoon. Pierson Dixon announced that Prime Minister Eden had made a statement in his name and in that of the French Prime Minister Guy Mollet about an ultimatum that had been handed in London and Paris to Egypt and Israel, calling on them, "to remove their troops to a distance of ten miles from the Suez Canal." This created no problem for us since, at no point, were we anywhere near the Canal from which we were being called upon to "withdraw."

The French delegate made a speech totally identical with that of Britain. Cabot Lodge, who was never marked by any urgency, now took off like a rocket. His aristocratic family in Boston had once been described as being dominated by "a tranquil air of effortless superiority." He seemed to have overcome this in the virulence of his assault on his NATO allies. He drafted a resolution calling not only for Israel's withdrawal, but also for "the duty of all member states to withhold all military, economic, or financial aid from Israel until it complied with the withdrawal resolution." Sobolev joined Lodge in the verbal castigation. This lent a bizarre note to the occasion since, in a parallel discussion on the Soviet assault on Hungary, Lodge and Sobolev were at daggers drawn.

I took the floor to describe the Egyptian threats to Israel's existence, the savagery of the *fedayeen* raids, the inaction of the United Nations, and the Egyptian "paradox of unilateral belligerency." I was consciously keeping my main assault for what I knew would be an Assembly meeting in the next few days. Reading from Ben-Gurion's telegram, I stated that Israel did not intend to acquire new territories, but merely

to eliminate threats to our nation's security arising from the murder gangs and the hostile armies. The U.S. resolution was put to the vote—seven in favor. Abstentions by Australia and Belgium. And, oh, great sensation, Britain and France raising their hands in negative votes which amounted to a double veto. The French chairman announced, with undisguised pleasure, that “the resolution has not been adopted.” Australia and Belgium abstaining; and Britain and France against.

Back to the Delegates' Lounge. I found myself enclosed in a strange capsule of apathy. Israel being castigated by the Security Council was a familiar theme. A British and French conflict with the United States and the Soviet Union was great copy. This was “man biting dog.” It was well past midnight in Israel, and I received no news of any substance from hurried telephone calls. The wire services, however, were reporting spectacular Israeli advances.

October 31

Security Council convened again. Press reports say that the Israeli government had accepted the Anglo-French “ultimatum,” that Egypt had rejected it, whereupon British and French aircraft have begun to bomb Egypt as a preliminary to military landings. Pierson Dixon strongly denies that Britain and France acted in common cause with Israel. Goes on to say that his government “does not support Israeli intentions to capture Egyptian territories.” Heavens alive, what cynicism and hypocrisy! Britain, he says “had no doubt that in crossing the Egyptian boundary, Israel had violated the armistice agreement.”

I found this sanctimonious tone hard to take—two weeks after the collusion with Selwyn Lloyd at Sèvres for a united assault on Egypt!

The United States and the Soviet Union are preparing for an emergency meeting of the General Assembly under the “Uniting for Peace” resolution. Scheduled for November 1, at 5:30.

October 30. Late evening

More fireworks. We were gathering up our papers to prepare for the November 1 meeting when Hammarskjöld asked quietly for the floor. He usually did everything quietly. Now in a voice shaking with emotion, he read out a “personal declaration” which implied a clear threat to resign in protest against British and French violations of their Charter obligations. He was more eloquent, even, than ever before. He said that the principles of the Charter were much more important than the organization that embodied them. “In order to preserve the efficacy of the UN, the Secretary-General must abstain

from taking a public position in relation to a conflict between member states, unless taking such a position would help to remove the conflict. But a Secretary-General cannot fulfill his function except on the assumption that all members of the UN, especially the five permanent members of the Security Council, would carry out their obligations. If they are members who believe that the welfare of the organization requires a different conception of the Secretary-General's role, it is their right to act accordingly . . ."

Hammar skjöld has a refined sense of drama. He knows how to create publicity by an air of conspicuous unobtrusiveness. His passionate speech has had a sharp effect on the news media. World opinion, shattered by the impotence of the Security Council, is looking for an international hero. Hammar skjöld has thrown his hat into the ring. (Not that anyone has ever seen him with a hat.) There was an air of deliberate martyrdom in his bearing. A chorus of loyalty and almost of worship went up loudly around the table.

Looking back to this diary entry, I recall that Dag Hammar skjöld always interpreted the office of secretary-general more distinctively than did anyone who preceded or succeeded him. It is strange to reflect that his chief credential for appointment was his alleged anonymity. Trygve Lie, in his blustering way, had set a precedent for candor and self-assertion. But he had conducted himself so abrasively that his personality was bound to collide with the urbane refinements that the task required. Hammar skjöld moved and spoke and reacted with an extraordinary lightness of touch. Indeed, lightness was the adjective that most corresponded to his personality. He was slight of build and surrounded himself with art and music and, above all, with literature, with the air of one who despised the strident diplomatic arena in which he operated.

Some people thought that he would have made a great actor, but, in my view, the art that most reflected his personality would be that of the ballet. He knew how to glide and pirouette between the obstacles. In his discourse with me as with other UN ambassadors, he cultivated a sharp intellectuality, constantly appealing to logic that alone could save errant mankind from self-inflicted perdition. Yet, there was a metaphysical side to his character. He seemed to be appealing above the dust and heat of the marketplace to visions of beauty and rectitude that seemed incompatible with a vocation whose exponents were men of this world, wearily aware that conflict is endemic to human nature and that it operates in the international domain without any of the consensual restraints that prevent national societies from leaping toward their own doom.

A conversation with him had its aesthetic quality, which was rare in UN discourse. He also brought to his task something of the northern darkness, which broods over so much of Scandinavian literature and art. He was a man

who felt very close to what a Roman philosopher called "the tears of things." Yet, often, when one expected elevation and remoteness, he would astonish his listeners with a dry legalism, articulated from memory, with all the texts and dates and details and deductive power that might have been expected from a mathematician.

Many foreign ministers and ambassadors felt betrayed by the degree in which he refuted the legend of his alleged vagueness and self-deprecation. The truth is that the office of UN secretary-general, in the contemporary international context, is not fashioned for idiosyncratic personalities. After Hammarskjöld's mission ended with appropriate drama in the flames of a crashed aircraft in Congo, I closely followed the search for his successor. I remember a distinguished British diplomat approaching me in the Delegates' Lounge with a question about U Thant. He wanted to know if, in view of Israel's close relations with Burma, I had studied his opinions and attitudes. A few days later, I returned and told my colleague that I could not recall a single opinion that Thant had expressed on any question at all. "Ah, that's just the man for us," said my British colleague, rubbing his hands in satisfaction, as though he had seen a sudden gleam of treasure. Hammarskjöld also had been appointed on the assumption that he would be innocuous and subservient to the powers.

Hammarskjöld's outburst in the Suez crisis ran against the grain of his temperament. As a rule, he hated confrontation. My worst moments were when I went to see him with Golda Meir, when she was foreign minister. Her directness clashed excruciatingly with his subtlety. I have never been in a room with two people whose aversion for each other was more intense.

Not that his attitudes in the Suez crisis were congenial to me. His outburst in the Security Council was inspired by the idea that since Britain, France and Israel had acted outside and beyond their Charter rights, it would be vital that none of them should gain benefit or reward. In the ensuing months, I was to develop the theme that it would be grotesque to restore such illegalities as maritime blockades and belligerent raids just because their elimination had been brought about by violence. Yet, this was Hammarskjöld's attitude from beginning to end. Even when statesmen like Lester Pearson and, to some extent, Foster Dulles were inclined to use the explosion in Sinai and Suez in such manner as to give a new direction to Middle Eastern politics, Hammarskjöld rigorously defended a return to the previous status quo. His position was based on the formalistic line that nobody must derive advantage from the Sinai campaign or the Suez invasion. My reaction that this attitude would only build a new bonfire, and even put a match to it, was one that he seemed to absorb intellectually, but from which he recoiled in the passion of his devotion to principle.

Since there would be a full day between the Security Council and the General Assembly, I flew back to Washington on October 31. Sherman Adams, who

had been Eisenhower's chief of staff, had conducted a telephone conversation with Abba Hillel Silver. The president asked Silver to tell Ben-Gurion that he would make a broadcast to the nation the next day and would like to abstain from condemning Israel. He, therefore, wanted to receive a promise that Israel would not retain its forces in the area that it had occupied. Could Ben-Gurion announce that since the Israeli forces had completed their mission, namely the liquidation of the *fedayeen* bases, they would return to the previous boundary? If we were to do this, the president would include in his broadcast a statement of deep appreciation and of friendship toward Israel. Eisenhower added that, even though it seemed that there was a convergence of interests between Israel and those of Britain and France, Israel's future was bound up with the United States. Eisenhower, suspected of woolliness, was in fact capable of sharp lucidity in judgment, if not always in expression.

Silver, at my suggestion, telephoned this message personally to Ben-Gurion, who replied, "The enemy is listening, and I can't possibly tell you now if we will withdraw or not."

A few hours later, when the enemy presumably was not listening, I received a coded cable from Ben-Gurion permitting me to meet Eisenhower's request, provided that I could avoid using the word "withdrawal." I sent back a message stating that my speech would include the sentence that "Israel has no desire or intention to wield arms beyond the limit of its legitimate defensive mission. But whatever is demanded of us by way of restoring Egypt's rights and respecting Egypt's security must surely be accompanied by equally binding Egyptian undertakings to respect Israel's security and Israel's rights."

I was rather pleased with this and so, apparently, was Ben-Gurion. His method of expressing enthusiasm about something was to receive it with total silence, which I could interpret at my own peril as acquiescence.

Diary, November 1

My statement on behalf of Ben-Gurion that Israel did not intend to expand its territory reached the White House at 4:00 in the afternoon today. It appears to have had some influence on Eisenhower's speech.

I had begun the day in New York with telephone conversations with Golda Meir and Shimon Peres from Tel Aviv. They told me about the success of our military operations. We were within a dozen miles of the Suez Canal; most of Sinai and the Gaza Strip were in our hands; the crew of an Egyptian warship that had tried to bomb Haifa had surrendered; the Egyptian armies in Sinai had collapsed; thousands of prisoners had been taken; enormous quantities of arms and equipment had come into our hands.

Amid all these good tidings, I was disturbed by a question that Peres asked me on Ben-Gurion's behalf: How can the United Nations be dealing with the

problem when Britain and France had vetoed the discussion in the Security Council? It was clear to me from this ostensibly innocent question that I had stumbled upon a grave error in the planning of the operation. In our relations with the French, enormous efforts had been invested in the aim of securing a French veto. It appeared that the Israeli government believed that this would end the UN intervention!

Since the planning had been carefully kept secret, neither our UN delegation nor our Foreign Ministry had any opportunity of informing Jerusalem that a Security Council veto, however satisfying, would not arrest the ongoing momentum of a UN debate. It was clear that two elements in the planning of the operation that would soon prove erroneous had won the day in the pre-war consultations. First, it was believed that a veto would paralyze the United Nations; second, it was taken as axiomatic that a choice of timing, a week or so before the election, would effectively neutralize the activity of the president of the United States. As it predictably turned out, this was the precise opposite of what would happen. The fact that we had acted in conscious awareness of the election date was responsible for a very large proportion of Eisenhower's rage. We were not only disrupting the Atlantic Alliance, we were also seeking to undermine his election campaign.

I expected my talk with Dulles on November 1 to be confined to his declaration about the suspension of our aid program. I already had indications of this in the State Department. The journey of a team of the Export-Import Bank, which was due to recommend a new loan of \$75 million, had been held up. So, too, were negotiations on the utilization of the residue of the grant-in-aid, and on the food surplus agreement, which I had negotiated with Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson. In spite of these portents, I told my embassy staff that I did not intend to talk about financial aid to Israel. I would use my talk with Dulles to expatiate on the motives for our military action.

Diary, November 2

My talk with Dulles yesterday began with his statement that he was naturally looking at the United States aid programs, but would first like to hear about our intentions. Did we intend to remain in Sinai or go back to the previous boundary after carrying out the mission that we had assumed?

I decided to go on the offensive. I said, rather grandly with an opulent sweep of my hand, that with all the importance of the money, which we appreciate very deeply, my own mind was occupied by fundamental thoughts about the future of our region. "The military power of Nasser," I said, "is in collapse; his prestige is sinking; it is possible to bring him low and thereby to deal a heavy blow to Soviet influence in the Middle East, simultaneously with Soviet troubles in Europe. In this

revolutionary situation, a crucial hour has been reached; the aim should be not to restore a situation charged with explosiveness, but rather to make a dramatic leap forward to peace."

As soon as we left the subject of financial aid and began to talk about strategy, Dulles's demeanor changed. The question of the economic aid program was shelved. The secretary said that my conceptions were big and he liked them. "Look," he said, "I'm terribly torn. No one can be happier than I am that Nasser has been defeated. Since Spring, I have had only cause to detest him, but can we accept a good end when it is achieved by means which violate the Charter?" He asked, "Do you think we should have one standard of reaction to our adversaries and another standard for our friends?" To his evident dismay, I replied, "Oh, yes, Mr. Secretary, I do. Isn't that what friendship's about?" The rest of the conversation proceeded in a relaxed tone. This extraordinary man was capable of swift changes of mood and emotion. He was even prepared to try his hand at humor of a sort. He said, "You must confess I was right when I told you that your military situation was not all that bad; why did you have to panic about Egypt receiving Soviet arms?"

This remark appeared to amuse him immensely, and his unaccustomed laughter followed me down the corridor.

November 2

The General Assembly meeting last night opened at 5:00. The hall had never been so crowded. It was estimated that 70 million people were watching the proceedings.

The Arabs requested a strong condemnation and sanctions. Dulles admitted that there were "provocations" and that there had been a certain measure of "neglect by the United States." But all that could not justify recourse to force.

As the debate went on, it became evident that I would have to speak that night. I adjourned to the Westbury Hotel restaurant on East 70th Street, just opposite our delegation building. With me was Dr. Jacob Robinson, our legal advisor. He asked me anxiously whether I intended to defend our action in terms of Article 51 of the UN Charter, which provides for the exercise of the inherent right of self-defense. I replied that, in my UN experience, there was no action that was incapable of being ascribed to Article 51 of the Charter. The important things for me were to separate the Israeli action from the less convincing motives which had inspired the British and French interventions. When Robinson left, I borrowed a pencil from the waiter and a few pieces of paper and hurriedly wrote out a few main headings for my speech.

I had been given a friendly tip by David Sarnoff, president of RCA, the great broadcasting consortium, that if I could arrange to get on the air at

about 11:30, I would get complete national coverage, since the regular television programs—especially those devoted to sport—would be over. It was nearly midnight when I rose to make my address.

I had decided that my main task was not to argue about the legalistic justifications of military actions, but to tell the story of a people driven to rage by its solitude and the lack of friendly support.

Stretching back far behind the events of this week lies the unique and somber story of a small people, subjected throughout all the years of its national existence to a furious implacable comprehensive campaign of hatred and siege, for which there is no parallel or precedent in the modern history of nations.

Whatever rights are enjoyed by other members of this organization belong to Israel without addition or diminution. Whatever obligation any member state owes to another, Egypt owes to Israel and Israel to Egypt.

Are we acting legitimately within our inherent right of self-defense, when having found no other remedy for two years, we cross the frontier against those who have no scruples about crossing the frontier against us?

Surrounded by hostile armies on all its land frontiers; subjected to savage and relentless hostility; exposed to penetration, raids, and assaults by day and by night; suffering constant toll of life among its citizenry; bombarded by threats of neighboring governments to accomplish its extinction by armed force; embattled, blockaded, besieged, Israel alone among the nations faces a battle for its security anew with every approaching nightfall and every rising dawn.

I had a feeling that everything was flowing well, with thought and speech in total unison. The hall was hot and tense with listening. I could feel that many of the 70 million beyond were held in similar suspense. The speech approached its end:

Our signpost is not backward to belligerency but forward to peace. Egypt and Israel are two nations whose encounters in history have been memorable for mankind. Surely they must take their journey from this tragic moment toward these horizons of peace . . .

I still remember how the cascades of applause broke out around me, growing in intensity, sometimes accompanied by emotional stamping of feet. It was a moment both of exhaustion and relief. The exhaustion belonged to the tension of recent days and the knowledge that I had been afforded a unique opportunity to affect the direction of world opinion. The relief came from feeling that I had got something off Israel's chest that had badly needed

saying. No matter what the political or voting outcome would be, the cathartic liberation from a pent-up grievance would have a healing effect.

It was past 2:00 in the morning when the vote came: sixty-four in favor of the withdrawal resolution, five against—Britain, France, Israel, Australia and New Zealand—with six abstentions. As I walked down to the lobby, Dulles was waiting there with his legal adviser, Herman Phleger, a stereotype of San Franciscan rectitude. I thought that Dulles looked haggard and yellow. He chewed and swallowed nervously, then he began to speak with typically forensic professionalism: "Listen, you didn't seem to be reading. Did you have a manuscript?" I told him that, owing to pressure of time, I had not prepared my speech at all but had formulated it on the basis of a few notes. I took out the piece of paper on which I had written about twenty lines at the Westbury Hotel. He looked at me hard and offered a memorable tribute: "Jesus Christ," he said, as he stalked away. I was later told that this was the only occasion on which that austere churchman had been heard to utter the familiar but irreverent expletive.

This had been a highlight for me. Echoes from my address came streaming in. The radio and television stations kept repeating full transmissions of it. Our delegation, with miraculous speed, produced a verbatim transcript, in thousands of copies. Hundreds of telegrams reached me on that day, and more by the end of a week. Ben Raeburn of Horizon Press approached our consul, Reuven Dafni, with a suggestion that I publish a book of speeches. An enterprising radio company put a record into the stores within a week.

The problem was how to give expression, in concrete terms, to this flood of goodwill. The United Nations, in its usual manner, expressed a sharp dichotomy between its reaction and its conclusion. Having applauded the speech with sustained and vigorous applause, it had gone on to vote against us by a huge majority. Opinion was one thing and policy was another.

If our only aim was to explain our rectitude, we had done as much as was possible. If there was the added ambition of finding a way out of the deadlock, the natural thing for me to do was to invite the assistance of Mike Pearson. I found him at his place at the table greeting me with the wise smile of a man who knows that there is a great amount of hysteria in the world but that it is not mandatory to join it. He was rather like the sane, solid brother in a family whose other members repeatedly get themselves into tangled dilemmas. He evidently thought that the very intricacy of the mess that all the parties were in made it objectively timely to seek a way out. He thought that Nasser had been intolerably provocative. On the other hand, Mike Pearson was a zealot of the United Nations ideal and a firm supporter of its law. It was clear that, despite his devotion to the two countries—Britain and France, out of which Canada had been born—he attached no weight whatever to the British view that Nasser's nationalization of the Canal was anything like the eruption of Hitler in the 1930s; nor did he like the British and French contention that the ignorant Arabs would be unable to bring ships through the Suez Canal. He regarded this as colonialist contempt.

He had spent many weeks trying to explain to the British—both in London and in Ottawa—that the United States, and indeed Canada, would find it impossible to regard the nationalization of the Canal, or even Nasser's previous activity, as an adequate reason for all-out war. In a memorable address explaining his abstention in the vote, he suggested that the General Assembly should use the cease-fire, not simply for perpetuating the deadlock, but for advancing a political solution, not only of the problems of the Suez Canal, but also of the Arab-Israeli relationship. He then threw an idea into the air that was to play a central role in future events: He proposed that the United Nations should establish an international force that would replace the British, French and Israeli troops, and would remain in place to ensure the maintenance of peace on the boundaries.

In later months and years, the UN peacekeeping role developed quickly, and Pearson was justifiably awarded the Nobel Prize.

In my cable home to Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir, I was able to say that the United States resolution that had been adopted did contain some loopholes through which we could maneuver: First, the references in the Security Council text to sanctions against Israel had been omitted. Second, the General Assembly had determined that our neighbors had often "violated the armistice agreement." Most important of all, there was to be a gap of time between the cease-fire and the withdrawal of forces. The cease-fire was to be "immediate," while the withdrawal of forces was to take place "as soon as possible."

I now found myself in a paradoxical situation that would have been amusing if human life had not been at issue. The Israeli forces had accomplished their military aim, while the British and French had not even begun theirs. On November 3, when the cease-fire was to go into effect, we had nearly all of Sinai in our hands. But the Anglo-French landing in the Suez Canal had not begun at all. Britain and France, therefore, rejected the call for a cease-fire. They were theoretically fighting to secure our withdrawal from a place that we had never reached, and in the language of their weird ultimatum, they were to "separate" forces that had already stopped fighting!

When I let it be known at the UN that I saw no objection to a cease-fire, I received an agitated telephone call from our Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv. I was told that, while we had very little more to do in the field, except to advance to Sharm el-Sheikh, the French and British were embarrassed by the idea that we would cease fire before they had begun. What would now happen to their assertion that they had only entered Egypt in order to prevent Israel from pursuing its campaign?

It was clear that my speech and Pearson's concrete proposal had changed the atmosphere. Ambassador Lodge had no course but to accept priority for the Canadian resolution, asking the secretary-general to establish an international force in the next forty-eight hours. He announced that the United States would meanwhile not press for action on its two resolutions. Extraordinary staff work by Hammarskjöld, Bunche and the UN Secretariat made

it possible for a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to be proposed in the General Assembly on November 5. At 3:30 on the morning of that day, the Assembly adopted the Canadian resolution with sixteen abstentions, including the Soviet Bloc, France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel and Egypt. It also voted again for withdrawal, to which again there were five opposing votes: Israel, France, Britain, New Zealand and Australia.

Moscow was sensitive about a force that would, in all likelihood, be confined to Western and neutral countries, and reflect the power of the pro-American majority in the General Assembly. The Soviet Union was also traumatically affected by the memory of a previous "United Nations force" that had, in fact, been a cover for an American operation under President Truman and General Douglas MacArthur in Korea.

It was only on the morning of November 5 that the airborne assault by Britain and France in the Canal zone began at last. Having been late in its commencement, the operation was now to be ineffective in its execution. There was, naturally, a vast intensification of international pressures. This time, the Soviet Union called for a cease-fire, stipulating that it must come into effect "within twelve hours." The Soviet proposal went on to say that, if this did not happen, the United States and the Soviet Union, as two countries with air and sea power, should help Egypt with weapons, volunteers and "other military means."

The conflict had thus been propelled into the very eye of a global storm. The Arab-Israeli confrontation had developed into a test of strength and nerve for the nuclear superpowers. Eisenhower sternly rebuked the Soviet "offer" to assuage the regional fire by pouring large barrels of global oil upon its embers. But the second week in November was an inferno of overlapping tensions. The United States and the United Kingdom were not on speaking terms. Washington was squeezing Britain at the most sensitive points of its economy. British opinion was flowing swiftly away from support of Anthony Eden's adventure. Great crowds were assembling in Trafalgar Square to protest the war. And the landings in Port Said and the air attacks on Egypt were nothing but the petulant and belated symptoms of a military fiasco. The nervous and physical collapse of Anthony Eden compounded and aggravated his nation's agony.

Many aspects of the Anglo-French action might have been forgiven if the military campaign had been successful. But nothing fails like failure. A Britain divided against itself, humiliated by defeat and subjected to American hostility, had no course but to abandon the field. The French leaders were more robust, but reacted with exaggerated seriousness to the Soviet threats to drop missiles on Paris and London. In the end, Britain and France accepted a farcical procedure; the United Nations took over their positions in a revolving-door movement and then handed the Canal Zone back to Egypt a few days later. The objective was to enable Eden and Mollet to say that they had captured the Canal and transferred it to the

world community, not to Egypt. It was the most transparent veil in diplomatic history.

More disquieting for me was the fact that our own Israeli leadership was in disarray. I felt that Ben-Gurion was, for the only time, out of touch with reality and with his own duty.

He was clearly unnerved by Eisenhower's hostility and still more by the brutality of the Soviet pressure. On November 5 he had received a letter from Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin declaring that Israel was performing criminal acts at the behest of external imperialist forces. The letter was full of menace:

The Government of Israel is criminally and irresponsibly playing with the fate of the world, with the fate of its own people. It is sowing hatred of the State of Israel among the Eastern peoples such as cannot but leave its mark on the future of Israel and places in question the very existence of Israel as a state. The Soviet Union is at this moment taking steps to put an end to the war and to restrain the aggressor. The Government of Israel should consider before it is too late. We hope that the Government of Israel will fully understand and appreciate this warning.

The background for this unprecedented tirade was the hint in other Soviet communications that its missiles could easily reach the transgressor states. The Israeli reaction was to pass from excessive exuberance to excessive panic. The exuberance was expressed in triumphant oratory that gripped an ecstatic people when the first news of military success had been heard and reported. This was a natural first reaction to a providential emergence from blockade and embattled solitude. But it continued far beyond the limits of reason and prudence. In the Knesset on the evening of November 7, Ben-Gurion described the campaign as "the greatest and most glorious operation in the annals of our people and one of the most remarkable in world history." He stated, absurdly, that according to a Greek historian Sharm el-Sheikh had been the seat of an ancient Jewish kingdom. And he announced the termination of the Egyptian-Israeli armistice agreement and the refusal of Israel to allow any foreign soldier, even an international force, in any of the areas occupied by Israel. He added that these positions would be maintained by Israel "with full force and unflinching determination."

I saw no chance that Ben-Gurion would be able to maintain his "unflinching determination" for a single week. In a conversation with Lester Pearson the next day I found this friendly and earnest statesman sharply alienated. He said, "This speech must have been as offensive to the British, the French, the Americans and to us Canadians as it was to the Arabs. If you people persist with this, you run the risk of losing all your friends."

Historians and Israelis close to Ben-Gurion have never found a convincing

explanation of this speech. Yaacov Herzog, Ben-Gurion's principal and most talented adviser at that time, said indulgently that it was a deliberate tactic to shock the world into helping Israel to end its "nightmare" of insecurity. Shimon Peres held the view that Ben-Gurion aimed to capture Sinai only as a bargaining device to secure free passage in the Gulf of Aqaba. Golda Meir said more realistically: "I think Ben-Gurion believed that we could stay in Sinai and Gaza. He did not take into consideration, nor did any of us, that the Soviet Union would respond as it did."

Ben-Gurion, however, had a simpler and disarmingly serene explanation, quoted by the historian Michael Brecher:

I made a few mistakes in that speech. I went too far and it was against the views I had expressed in the Government on October 28 that they would not let us stay in Sinai or Gaza and that our only aim should be to open the Straits . . . But, you see, victory was too quick. I was too drunk with victory.¹

Eisenhower sent an angry message to Ben-Gurion, protesting his speech. Herbert Hoover, Jr., acting as secretary of state while Dulles was absent for an operation for cancer, predicted to my deputy Shiloah that Ben-Gurion was risking "Israel's eventual expulsion from the United Nations."

I thought that my own duty as the head of our two most important diplomatic missions was not only to register the breakdown of our international position, but to suggest a remedy. I proposed a formula that would enable us to satisfy the United States, which alone could neutralize the Soviet threat, while leaving the door open for us to resume the pursuit of our limited but eminently righteous war aims—free passage through the Straits and tranquillity on our southern border facing Gaza. I cabled Ben-Gurion that he would have to retreat from the refusal to admit the international force. On the contrary, we should use the international force as an instrument for gaining both time and opportunity. My proposal was that we should inform the United States that we would withdraw from Sinai and Gaza "when satisfactory arrangements are made with the international force about to enter the Canal Zone."

Ben-Gurion's first reaction was to suggest a meeting with Eisenhower. This was totally unrealistic. Eisenhower's mood was punitive. He had won reelection by a huge majority against a distinguished opponent in a campaign he thought that Israel had attempted to derail. He had refused to see Anthony Eden, the head of America's principal ally. Eisenhower was asking all over Washington whether Ben-Gurion's reputation for lucidity was justified. I explained to Ben-Gurion that the U.S. was not convinced that the Soviet

¹Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 283.

threats against Britain, France and Israel were anything more than intimidatory, but it was taking no chances and ships of the Sixth Fleet had been ordered to the high seas in order to avoid a Pearl Harbor kind of attack. My estimate was that the U.S. would not use military force to dislodge us from Sinai but that it would exert all its influence to replace Israeli troops with the international force that Pearson had proposed.

I was now faced with one of the most extraordinary situations that I or, for that matter, any other ambassador had ever confronted. The Israeli Cabinet on November 8 was in constant session, reeling under its international unpopularity and Soviet rocket-rattling. The French defense minister, Maurice Bourges-Maunoury, had told Shimon Peres that he would advise us not to take the Soviet threats lightly. The Cabinet was taking them so seriously that it was almost paralyzed. There were two options: One was to announce complete and unconditional withdrawal; the other was my proposal to make the withdrawal dependent on satisfactory arrangements with the projected international force. In the first case, we would emerge from the war humiliated and with no gain from much effort and sacrifice. In the second case, we could mount an intense diplomatic and public campaign to secure our aims with intermediate partial withdrawals parallel with the diplomatic effort.

The second course was evidently more favorable to our interests, but some of the more nervous ministers, including Pinhas Sapir and Zalman Aranne, feared that anything short of an unconditional capitulation would bring the dreaded Soviet missiles on our undefended heads. "Eban must be out of his mind," said the trembling dissentients. Ben-Gurion's reaction was spectacular in its originality. He had decided to leave a peace-or-war decision to me. In the words of two witnesses—Yaacov Herzog and Gideon Rafael—Ben-Gurion said that "if Eban takes responsibility, then I agree." He then held up the speech that he had planned in a national broadcast for some hours to give time to see if I would still hold to my proposal after taking soundings in Washington.

In two and a half hours, I had made the soundings with Walter Bedell Smith, Allen Dulles (the director of the CIA), and with Senators Lyndon B. Johnson and William F. Knowland, who were the two congressional leaders serving with the U.S. mission to the UN. I even made indirect contact with Foster Dulles, who was in temporary convalescence from his operation.

I advised Ben-Gurion to take version two of the fateful paragraph in his delayed speech, and to make withdrawal conditional on the entry and functioning of the UN Emergency Force. My American interlocutors did not want a victory for Soviet intimidation. My own calculation was that Eisenhower would be firm against Soviet threats and that we would come empty-handed out of the war if we did not have a proviso enabling us to fight politically for free maritime passage and peace in the vicinity of Gaza.

In an age in which heads of government have usurped the negotiating

functions of ambassadors in response to the vogue of summitry and the consequent "monarchization of government," the idea that an ambassador can decide between sensitive and potentially explosive courses seems unreal even in retrospect. This situation was achieved in this case as a result of two qualities of Ben-Gurion: his ingenuity in finding eccentric exits from dilemmas, and his tendency to give absolute confidence to a subordinate to whom he had delegated authority.

The unusual character of this procedure has been noted by a historian:

This summation by Eban reflects the important role of a diplomat in the decision-making process. The strategic decision to withdraw was taken by Ben-Gurion before consulting Israel's envoy in America. Eban's recommendation to retain the (stronger) formula followed approval by the U.S. Secretary of State. At the same time, his role was innovative and the burden of responsibility placed upon him on November 8 was very heavy. He reacted decisively. Finally, the formula permitted phased withdrawal and therefore ample time to secure concessions, the *raison d'être* of the political struggle to follow.²

Conor Cruise O'Brien, who also seems to have had access to much documentation, awarded me Talleyrand's crown in discussing this episode in his review of my book *The New Diplomacy* in the *London Observer* in 1984. The unsolved and unanswerable question is how Ben-Gurion would have reacted and what would have ensued if I had chosen the supposedly "safer" course and left Israel without a right of maritime passage and with a vulnerable southern region after the Sinai War. It is true that ten years later, in 1967, Nasser tried to annul both of our successes, but it was much easier for Israel to defend a maritime passage that already existed than it would have been to resume the fight for a maritime artery that was annulled by a blockade.

By now the British and French landings and air bombings had subsided under the intimidatory pressures of American and Soviet policy. In each of their histories, the Suez fiasco was a turning point. Indeed, it was a watershed in the history of power. The international consequences of the Suez War were more far-reaching than anything that occurred on the regional level. Britain spent some years reflecting on its change of status, vacillating between a hopeless longing for a "special relationship" with the United States and a reluctant acceptance of a European destiny. France accepted the 1956 defeat with better grace and without having to face a hostile domestic opinion. Its response to failure provoked a speedy end of the Algerian occupation, a thorough revision of the anarchic constitutional system, a successful appeal

²*Ibid.*, p. 290 ff.

to the national hero to return to the helm, the birth and evolution of bombings and the successful bid for leadership in the European Community. Despite the limited contours of the actual battle, the world after Suez was irreversibly changed. It became relentlessly bipolar, with only two nations able to claim superpower status.

Some years later, when I went to see President Johnson before the 1967 Six Day War, he asked me what I had heard in my conversation with General de Gaulle. I said, "He told me that the four Great Powers should concert their action."

Johnson replied: "Who the hell are the other two?" It was the 1956 crisis that made this riposte feasible.

The directives that I now received from Ben-Gurion were to concentrate intensely and exclusively on two aims: to achieve a result in which Israeli and other shipping would be free to navigate the Straits of Tiran and the Red Sea and in which our villages in the Negev would not be exposed to terrorist raids from Gaza. I confess that I felt exhilarated at being able to pursue these difficult but attainable goals without the impediment of attachment to an Anglo-French connection expressed in the ludicrous accord reached at Sèvres.

I had never felt a greater sense of personal excitement or fulfillment than during the four months between November 1956 and March 1957, when I was able to lead two impressive teams—our mission to the United Nations and our embassy in Washington—toward realistic and feasible goals. With the London-Paris collusion out of the way, we found good echoes in American public opinion. No less important was an improved attitude in the State Department, with Dulles, Robert Murphy and Herman Phleger becoming increasingly convinced that Egypt's belligerency was offensive to international law and to world peace. The case that I developed in dozens of encounters with the press, radio and television, foreign policy institutes and all branches of the Washington and UN establishments was now clear and simple. It was based on the doctrine that statesmanship should correct, and not just restore, the conditions out of which the explosion had come. I said that it would be a farfetched legalism to insist that the status quo, including the illegal aspects of it, should be unconditionally revived. I drew up a memorandum in this sense on January 2, 1957, and requested comment and reaction from Dulles.

The diplomatic ice began to melt in our favor in early February, just when the physical snow was thick on the ground. Murphy invited himself to breakfast in my home in Juniper Street and said that there was a disposition to meet our two claims—for free passage in the Straits of Tiran and for a security system in Gaza, both to be implemented through the UN Emergency Force. The point about the Straits was easier than Gaza, since there was no Armistice Agreement relevant to the Straits such as that which gave Egypt a contractual status. I concentrated on the maritime issue. My memorandum

went beyond the juridical aspect to touch on a larger vision: a new artery of maritime communication linking the continents of the old and new worlds, depriving Suez of its monopoly and reducing Europe's dependence on a single oil route, which Egypt could open or close at will.

On February 11 I became convinced that we were going to emerge from the war with Ben-Gurion's two objectives achieved. That was the day when Dulles called me to his office and handed me a memorandum on the Straits of Tiran and Gaza. My eyes lit up at the first reading. The United States was promising to support and assert Israel's right to send its own ships and cargoes without impediment through the Straits of Tiran; to acknowledge that if Egypt renewed its blockade Israel would be entitled to exercise its "inherent right of self-defense under Article Fifty-one of the UN Charter"; to encourage other states to exercise their right of free passage; and to maintain UN forces in Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza until such time as their removal would not lead to a renewal of belligerency.

Dulles accompanied this paper with an uncharacteristic commentary drawing my attention to the excellent quality of the merchandise that he was selling. He said that an American undertaking was far more valuable than a dubious declaration of non-belligerency by Egypt. He added that if we stayed at Sharm el-Sheikh we could build a pipeline but nobody would put any oil in it. He made an eloquent appeal for Israel and the U.S. to build an era of cooperation on the basis of his memorandum. Emphatic calls to us in a similar spirit reached me from our friends in the media and the Congress.

To my consternation, a negative reply came from Ben-Gurion. It said that the solution proposed was not positive; that there was no specific guarantee to protect Israeli shipping and that the concept of free passage was limited(!) to "innocent passage." Ben-Gurion added that "we could not agree to the stationing of UN forces at Nitsana."

We were back to November 7 again. I patiently informed Ben-Gurion that the memorandum had no reference to Nitsana and that the alternative to "innocent passage" is slave and drug traffic, which have never figured prominently among Zionist ideals. Innocent passage does not even forbid warships.

This unexpected rejection set off a whole cascade of pressures and irritations in Washington. Assembling my staff, I said that our government could not take yes for an answer. Dulles came back from consultation with Eisenhower in Georgia and asked me to his home. He said that if we did not see any advantage in the American initiative we were "free to try our luck elsewhere." This was ominous, since the UN General Assembly was discussing a sanctions motion that would certainly not have "encouraged" any state to send its ships through an Israel-dominated Sharm el-Sheikh. Dulles spoke of our being "on the verge of a catastrophe." He added: "If Israel is not interested in taking up the American initiative, the matter will go back to the United Nations, where I doubt that you could get any worthwhile guarantees at all."

Dulles had interrupted our talk twice to speak to Eisenhower on the telephone. Throughout the many years that I served in Washington during the Eisenhower years I never found the least evidence for the media contention that he was a figurehead president.

In order to gain time and postpone a headlong clash with a hundred percent of the world community, I told Dulles that I had been called home for consultation on the February 11 memorandum. In the meantime I arranged for this to become true. I left Dulles's home at the sound of his statement that he presumed Ben-Gurion had weighed all the dangers inherent in this course against the bright prospects available from negotiating on the basis of the U.S. memorandum. "If so," said Dulles, "I am unable to understand how Israel had reached such an eccentric conclusion."

I left for Israel without hearing Eisenhower's broadcast on February 23 in which he spoke emphatically in support of what he had done to allay Israel's concerns. But he had added that if Israel rejected every sincere effort to improve its position "the United States would have to adopt measures that might have far-reaching effects on Israel's relations throughout the world."

By the time that I arrived in Jerusalem Ben-Gurion had evidently been impressed by the gravity of what I had reported about the atmosphere in the U.S. Even Rabbi Silver and Senators Johnson and Knowland, who had assisted me greatly in the struggle for our positions on Gaza and the Gulf of 'Aqaba, had told me that "your chief is carrying his stubbornness too far." In our talk Ben-Gurion was disposed to regard the February 11 memorandum as a great achievement. He spoke vaguely about "internal difficulties" in a way that insinuated that General Dayan was reluctant to abandon his conquests. But he sent me back with pragmatic directives, some of them severe, which in my judgment would enable me to bring the crisis with Dulles and Eisenhower to a successful end. A message from Bedell Smith in Washington in which that good friend of Israel had implored Ben-Gurion "to give Eban something to work with" contributed to the improvement in the prime minister's mood.

In the course of our talk I informed Ben-Gurion that I had heard soundings that some influential Americans close to the "Dulles circles" were indicating that since Egypt took no interest in Gaza, they were exploring the idea of leaving Gaza in Israeli control after the withdrawal from Sinai in the hope that Israel would "break the back of the refugee problem." Golda Meir had asked me to probe Ben-Gurion's reaction. Ben-Gurion went up to heaven in a pillar of fire and a cloud of smoke. In barely suppressed indignation he said: "Gaza is a cancer. A barrel of gunpowder. A cancer can sometimes increase the size of a body, but every sane person tries to get rid of it. How can we take 350,000 Palestinian Arabs against their own will and against the will of the friendly and hostile nations without exploding our state from within? The most important decision that we shall have to take will be to withdraw from Gaza. Do anything! Get your U.N. force in there!"

Ben-Gurion had "awarded" me the UN force but clearly did not want to see Gaza as long as he lived.

I flew back to Washington via London. British weather prevented me from taking an immediate connection, so I checked into a hotel overnight. This innocent necessity not only left the UN General Assembly on tenterhooks with its sanctions resolution hovering over the East River. It also provoked a nervous flutter in Dulles's circles, where it was feared that I was stopping over in order to commit a new collusion with Anthony Eden's successors in Whitehall.

The minister in the U.S. Embassy, Walworth Barbour, was instructed to keep a watchful eye on my flight schedules!

I touched down in New York and used the few available hours to report to Golda Meir. I spoke to Arthur Dean, one of Dulles's close advisers in the same prestigious law office, in the hope that he would soften up the secretary in advance of my afternoon arrival. From National Airport in Washington I went straight to Dulles's residence, which was under virtual siege by newspapermen and TV reporters. The media have a strong nose for imminent blood, and the failure of my mission could mean, if not immediate war, at least a first use of sanctions.

Assembled in the secretary's living room were Dulles, Under Secretary Christian Herter and the five senior officers of the State Department. I recounted Ben-Gurion's position, which amounted to an appreciative acceptance of Dulles's February 11 memorandum coupled with a demand for a more emphatic statement of American support of Israel's right to forcible reaction if a blockade or raids from Gaza were renewed. When I finished, Dulles said, "Your attitude is constructive." At that moment I knew that Operation Kadesh was over and that we had not lost the struggle.

I went into a Socratic dialogue, while Shiloah made industrious record. Dulles gave the replies in shotgun speed. Yes, the U.S. would send its own flag through the Straits. Yes, the U.S. would support the development of an Israeli oil outlet. Yes, the U.S. would mobilize all the maritime nations to follow its lead in saying this in the United Nations. Yes, the U.S. would work for a UN administration in Gaza to replace the Israeli occupation. Yes, the U.S. would announce that if Israel's rights in the Gulf of 'Aqaba were again violated the U.S. would approve Israeli liberty to react under Article 51. Yes, the U.S. would encourage Hammarskjöld to include a naval patrol in the UN force to be stationed at Sharm el-Sheikh. Yes, the U.S. agreed that the UN force could not move out without that intention being brought to the General Assembly. Yes, President Eisenhower would write to Ben-Gurion setting out the American commitments.

Things were going so well that I whispered in Hebrew to Shiloah that "we ought to get out of here before they change their mind." I said that some of the understandings that we had reached needed Hammarskjöld's approval so I would now set wing for New York.

My relief was slightly premature. In New York Hammarskjöld gave scant deference to Dulles-Eban agreements. He would not sanction a naval patrol for the Straits of Tiran, though he had no complaint against legitimating Israel's maritime rights in the Gulf and the Straits. But on Gaza he was adamant. There would be no UN administration unless Egypt asked for it. Israel had no rights in Gaza, which was as Egyptian as Israel's territory under the 1949 Armistice Agreements was Israeli.

I called Dulles on the phone. He was very impatient with Hammarskjöld, but believed that there would be no majority in the General Assembly to overrule him. Meanwhile, French Prime Minister Guy Mollet and French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau were in Washington on a state visit. They had a proposal about how to strengthen Israel's position in Gaza despite Hammarskjöld's legal fundamentalism. Dulles suggested that I work out a scenario with Pineau.

Diary, February 26, 1957

I reached the French Embassy where I was greeted by Hervé Alphand, the Ambassador. Pineau entered flowing with cordiality. He and his prime minister were strongly in favor of the deal that I had worked out with Dulles. "If you create a real maritime reality in Sharm el-Sheikh and hold it with UN assistance for some years and if you also strengthen yourselves militarily with French and American aid, that will be more important than a quibble over words. Please do this for the sake of the French-Israeli entente.

His contribution was important. Israel should state in the Assembly that just as it could invoke Article 51 to defend itself against a renewal of the blockade in 'Aqaba, so would it defend its right to take action in the event of a recrudescence of raids from Gaza. The U.S. and France would endorse these assumptions, as would some other states. Egypt had promised silence. It did not want to deter Israel from leaving Sinai and Gaza. Pineau also told me that even though the Egyptians would probably not accept their banishment from the administration of Gaza, they had agreed that wherever there would be a UN Force, no other army would be present. This meant that the Egyptian army would not go back to Gaza.³

³The UN force remained in Gaza from 1957 to 1967. During that period the Egyptian army did not return to Gaza, although the Egyptian administration did go back. There were no raids from Gaza into Israel for ten years and the Israeli settlements in the Negev lived in peace. All this time the Straits of Tiran were developed as an Israeli oil and trade route to the East. In May 1967 Egypt under President Nasser occupied both Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza and suspended the gains that Israel had made in the Sinai campaign. Within three days, however, Israel with American approval restored all the advantages that it had gained in Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza.

On February 28 Golda Meir joined Dulles and me as we were drafting two speeches, one that Golda Meir would make in the General Assembly the next day and one in which Lodge would endorse the assumptions made in Golda's speech.

At a crowded meeting of the General Assembly on March 1, Golda duly expressed the assumption that we would have free passage in the Straits, that the UN force would remain as long as necessary to achieve that goal, that Israel would repel a resumed blockade in accordance with the inherent right of self-defense specified in the UN Charter and that we would act in a similar sense if the attacks from Gaza were renewed.

This speech was followed by statements of all the maritime powers supporting Israel's right to trade and navigate in the Gulf of 'Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran.

Lodge's speech did not satisfy Ben-Gurion on the Gaza issue, since there was no recommendation for the establishment of a UN administration. After another brief flurry Ben-Gurion was reassured by a letter from Eisenhower that Dulles had dictated to the president for signature from his home in my presence. Eisenhower repeated the American commitments in solemn terms and stated that Israel would not have cause to regret its withdrawal. Ben-Gurion attached overriding importance to the Eisenhower signature. He would not in any conditions try to reassure the Israeli public on the basis of a Dulles signature.

On March 15 Israeli troops withdrew from Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza. In April the American vessel SS *Kernhills* sailed through the Straits of Tiran to Elath, which began its spectacular expansion and development as a port and tourist city. Except for a few days in May 1967, Israel has been at peace in the waters of the Gulf ever since. Although a UN administration was not established in Gaza, the Egyptian army did not follow the Egyptian administration back to Gaza. There was thus no protection for *fedayeen* raids and the UN forces, thick on the ground, influenced the position by their very presence. Tranquillity reigned in the area bordering Gaza for the next ten years. The UN force was a success story in every respect except in the timing and the manner of its withdrawal by U Thant ten years later in 1967. By then, however, realities and habits had been established that were too solid for Nasser to overcome.

One of the results of this urgent diplomacy was that Israel resumed its rhythm of action and development, sustained by a reinforced friendship with the United States. Ben-Gurion convinced his domestic opinion that the fight had not been in vain; that concrete results had ensued from it; and that the alternative course of standing in embattled defiance of world pressures offered no constructive issue. In the four months during which Israel was developing its battle in the UN, Washington and across the world, the country itself was in sad condition. It was cut off from its commercial links. The Soviet Union and the other Communist countries had withdrawn their

ambassadors. Tourism was at a standstill. The rhythm of construction had died down and the country took on a dark, inert and empty aspect alien to its dynamic nature. It became evident that Israel is the kind of organism that can flourish only in close connection with the external realm.

Dulles was now gravely ill, but he persevered in office for the next two years. In all his talks with me he stated that there was a good and a bad Arab nationalism and the Nasser variety was the wrong sort. America became far more sensitive to our dilemmas and more apprehensive of our occasional outbursts of despair.

With their eyes fixed on the Eastern world, now joined to us by an open sea, Israelis would soon be able to explore the effects of their recent ordeals. Would we fall back into isolation and anxiety, or would there be a decade of peace and consolidation?

HOMEWARD BOUND: 1959

"HISTORY," WROTE KARL Marx, "would be very mystical if there were no room in it for chance." Surprising comment from that doughty determinist.

Could Israel's 1956 war have been avoided? The question must arise in any war, especially one so complex in its origins. Our military campaign of 1956 was not imposed inexorably upon us as were the wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973. It was not unanimously supported in the Knesset and was strongly criticized by former Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett. The association with Britain and France, whose motives were totally separate from ours, obscured the more realistic concerns of Israel. After all, there was no inferno of insecurity in Sussex or Normandy, as there was in many Israeli areas. Britain and France were not exposed to assaults on their lives and homes. Israel had much greater justification. Once we began to lose our balance of power and were faced by an Egyptian-Jordanian-Syrian alliance with no compensating support from the West in arms or effective guarantees, we were following historic precedent in challenging the adversary before it was too late. Stronger powers have fought "balance of power" wars. Churchill in a memorable speech in the 1930s described the need to curb regional domination by an expansionist power as the justification for his own country's resistance to Philip of Spain, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler before any of them had attacked Britain.

If anyone could have prevented Israel's Sinai War, it was the United States, which was the least entitled to self-righteousness. I later called the 1956 Israeli-Egyptian war "the war of the three squadrons." If Eisenhower and Dulles had supplied us with a minimal jet force, there would have been little temptation for us to go to Paris and make common cause with France. When I contemplate the lavish U.S. support of Israel's military power since the late 1970s, I am unable to rationalize the tenacity with which Eisenhower and Dulles refused to apply the "balance of power" principle to a conflict in which that doctrine was most relevant. The amount and quality of the arms

that we sought from the U.S. were trivial in comparison with their corresponding dimensions today.

On October 25, the establishment of a joint High Command to control the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies dispelled any doubt about the gravity of our nation's plight and the need for urgent response. The few writers who have probed the issue of justice in war-making are not unanimous about this one. The best verdict is by Michael Walzer:

States may use military force in the face of threats of war when the failure to do so would seriously risk their territorial integrity or political independence. Under such circumstances it can fairly be said that they have been forced to fight and that they are the victims of aggression. . . . A state under threat is like an individual hunted by an enemy who has announced his intention of killing or injuring him. Surely, such a person may surprise his hunter, if he is able to do so.¹

Nevertheless, the Israeli campaign in 1956 won little international understanding and few Israelis expected the Sinai campaign to mark an upward swing in Israel's fortunes. The commentators looked wisely at the clouds and predicted unceasing rain. They predicted that Israel would henceforth be identified in world opinion with the colonial powers; that the partnership with France and Britain would permanently mark Israel as an ally of "imperialism" and that Israel would find that it had gravely prejudiced its relationship with the United States.

None of these gloomy forecasts was fulfilled. The first symptom of recovery from our isolation in the Suez-Sinai War came in Washington in 1958. The argument between Israel and the United States was about whether Nasser's expansionist policy justified forceful reaction. In 1956 the United States had given a strongly negative answer. But in the summer of 1958, when Nasser was imposing his domination on other Arab states and attempting to overthrow all Arab regimes uncongenial to his leadership, the United States became as irritated as Israel, France and Britain had been in 1956. Dulles expressed his bitterness in memoranda about the distinction between legitimate Arab nationalism and Nasser's radicalism, which threatened the entire Middle East with instability. He asked me to transmit these dissertations to Ben-Gurion. For Dulles to write these thoughts to Ben-Gurion was rather like a recent convert to Catholicism preaching his new faith to one of the more theologically orthodox popes.

On July 14, 1958, the Iraqi government was overthrown and Iraq's royal family and its veteran prime minister, Nuri Said, were brutally murdered in the kind of bloodbath that has become an Iraqi tradition. At the same time,

¹Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 85.

Nasserist pressure was exercised both on the Christian government of Lebanon, headed by Camille Chamoun and Charles Malik, and on the Jordanian monarch to accept Nasser's policy of regional domination. A large force of 20,000 U.S. Marines was sent to Beirut, and Dulles asked me to persuade Ben-Gurion to allow British aircraft to overfly Israeli territory on their way to reinforce the Jordanian monarchy in Amman. Neither Eisenhower nor Dulles showed any embarrassment at this new role. Dulles's forensic talent was equal to the task of rejecting any implication of double standards. "You see, Mr. Ambassador," he said, "in 1956 Nasser was the victim and target of an aggressive assault. Today he is himself the primary Middle Eastern aggressor."

In the same conversation he hinted subtly that I might persuade members of the Congress to support the president's decision to send forces into the Middle East. To cap the new atmosphere of intimacy he asked me to come with my deputy, Yaacov Herzog, to follow him to London for a day to continue our conversation on how to thwart Nasser. I duly made the trip and found myself in the dawn's early light in the U.S. ambassador's spacious residence near Regents Park. The ambassador himself, Jock Whitney, took us around the house, showed us a wonderful collection of impressionist masterpieces, but expressed no views about the problems of Iraq, Lebanon and Israel that preoccupied his secretary of state.

On July 15, 1958, when the marines were established in Beirut and a British force took up its position in Jordan, American policy had come full circle toward a new vision of the Middle East and Israel. There was a sense of common purpose. Legislation under which the United States could intervene on behalf of threatened friends, under the name of the Eisenhower Doctrine, had been confirmed by the United States Congress in March 1957. It promised support for any Middle Eastern state threatened by aggression from a state "dominated by international communism."

There was irrelevance in this formulation, since Israel and some Arab states were threatened by a state, namely Egypt, that was dominated by Arab nationalism, not by international communism. However, I had strongly urged the Israeli government to accept inclusion in this quaint doctrine on the principle that if Israel, so long boycotted from Middle Eastern groupings and categories, was unexpectedly asked to join any grouping in our region, we should accept the invitation before it was hastily withdrawn.

The two Western powers were attempting, unrealistically, to dethrone Nasser from his leadership of the Arab world. Nasserism in their eyes had become more than a doctrine of Egyptian revolution. Its central theme was hegemonistic. Cairo saw itself not only as the capital of Egypt, but also as the center in which all Arab policies should be determined. Nasser's policy was one empire, one nation, one leader; and there was no difficulty in diagnosing who the leader should be. Wherever there was a government in the Arab world dedicated to traditional Muslim values, or to cordial relations with the

West, or one that declined to accept Nasser's pretensions to leadership, he and his agents would move for its overthrow. The United States and Britain initiated an Emergency Session of the United Nations in which they interpreted the UN Charter as an endorsement of intervention on behalf of the separate integrity and independence of Middle Eastern states.

Israel felt vindicated by American acceptance of these ideas. Indeed, without the use of our airspace it would have been impossible for the Western powers to supply Jordan. Quite apart from intellectual satisfaction, Israel drew practical relief from this robust American insight into Middle Eastern realities. Economic aid to Israel was renewed and the United States developed a sharper sensitivity than before toward the problems of Israel's defense. The road was open for a more dignified and prosperous period in American-Israeli relations. A note from Dulles told us that the action taken by Eisenhower to defend Lebanese independence should be regarded as an example of what the United States would do if Israel's survival were threatened. I followed my usual course of suggesting that the secretary's note be formatted as a presidential letter. It was a delicate task to indicate to the secretary that his credibility and that of President Eisenhower were not of the same weight.

In the special session of the UN General Assembly in the summer of 1958, I faced a voting dilemma. The Arab delegations, seeking to reunite the Arab world, drafted a resolution calling for respect for "the territorial integrity and political independence of Middle Eastern states." I asked Jerusalem for a directive on the Israeli vote. There was no reply. My political chiefs were otherwise engaged. The president of the General Assembly, Sir Leslie Munroe of New Zealand, left my name on the speaker's list right to the end. When no answer came from Israel, I ascended the podium and announced Israel's positive vote for the Arab resolution. I added that an exhaustive definition of the term "Middle Eastern states" could be found in a little blue booklet containing the names of the members of the United Nations. Golda Meir endorsed my action.

My own appraisal of Arab nationalism had been expressed in a lecture that I delivered in February 1958 at Friends' House in London to mark the tenth anniversary of Israel's independence. The chairman was Lord Samuel, who had been the first British High Commissioner in Palestine in 1920. He was then in his ninetieth year, and he riveted the audience with an introduction of impeccable eloquence and wit, all delivered without the use of notes.

My speech was based on the theme that "nothing divides the Arab world more than the attempt to unite it." I have been bountifully plagiarized on this as on other similar dicta ever since. I did not dispute the fact that the Arab world is a family whose members feel a common emotion, resentment, or pride in whatever moves any part of the family. But this family is fragmented in many of its main characteristics. Its members do not fall into the same economic categories. They cover a wide spectrum, from extravagant oil

wealth to acute poverty. Their regimes and orientations are diverse. This pluralism responds to differences of state structure, orientation and geographical positions that are inevitable in a family dispersed over such vast distances and interacting with such varied circumstances. My conclusion is that Arabs are united in their speech and sentiment, but divided in their interests.

Some Arab historians believe that there is only one Arab nation and that the fragmentation of the Arab nation into individual states is "artificial," whatever that means. No fixed criteria of normality have ever been devised for individuals, let alone for corporate entities. Once established with its flags, its place in international agencies, its panoplies and emblems, an Arab state, like any other, evokes allegiances that are not transcended by any larger unit of organization. Normality is an acquired attribute. When it comes down to hard realities it is now the separate, sovereign state that counts.

When one Arab state renounces its name and identity to merge with another Arab state, it is reasonable to be suspicious about whether the resultant "unity" is voluntary. When Syria became part of a "United Arab Republic" together with Egypt, I thought that it would only be a matter of time before Damascus would assert its historic fame as the seat of the first Caliphate. Meanwhile, I expressed my conviction that Syria was "united with Egypt in the manner that our prophet Jonah was united with the whale . . . an uncomfortable, excessively internal kind of union with a resulting sense of confinement."

I have had great difficulty with such sweeping, generic terms as "the Arabs" and even "the Arab world" and have advocated a meticulous study and understanding of each Middle Eastern nation as a distinctive entity in its own form and terms.

The year 1958 saw Arab states bringing harsh accusation against each other to the United Nations, with complaints against Nasser from Jordan, Iraq, Morocco and Lebanon. This was a vindication of my belief that diversity rather than unity is the distinguishing feature of Arab political structures.

For Israel, the recovery of our harmonious relationship with the United States was the most spectacular gain from the 1956 crisis. We were now being treated not as a burden to be chivalrously borne, but as a friend whose cooperation was worthy of respect. In that spirit, Dulles came to my embassy residence in May 1958 on the tenth anniversary of Israel's independence. He made a moving and eloquent speech about our nations' common values and experiences. The other guests around our not very large table in Juniper Street were Senators Symington, Knowland and Javits, Felix Frankfurter and the president of the AFL-CIO, George Meany. The central idea was to have as many couples as possible who never spoke to each other outside the Israeli embassy. In August 1958 I brought Dulles an impressive letter from Ben-Gurion, couched in visionary terms, about Israel's aid programs in

newly developing states. Dulles reacted enthusiastically and the U.S. supported the expansion of Israel's development assistance in the Third World.

There were still many ordeals ahead, but it seemed that the nightmare of weakness was over. Before 1956, many in the world still doubted Israel's durability. The country always seemed poised on the brink of bankruptcy. Its international stature had been limited. Nobody in the world made much effort to soothe its apprehensions. But after 1957 the prospect brightened; Israel's sharp reaction to prolonged belligerency had certainly evoked disapproval in many places, but it had also inspired an uneasy respect. It was likely that Israel would at least be taken into serious account and that its reactions to danger or provocation would be more carefully measured.

With every year that passed after the Suez-Sinai crisis, the country seemed to lose something of its fragility. The Jewish population grew rapidly in the next decade. The rate of economic expansion had few parallels. More eloquent than statistics of growth was the visible evidence of a landscape across which a green carpet of cultivation moved like an advancing tide. In the growing cities and suburbs there were signs of relative affluence, with the rise of a mercantile and professional middle class. Israel's agriculture celebrated many triumphs; its talent for profusion stirred the mind and hope of many nations in a famine-stricken world. From a million cultivated acres, Israel was producing eighty-five percent of the food consumed by two and a half million people at a high level of nutrition, while also exporting \$130 million worth of agricultural products to the world markets. The industrial infrastructure became more elaborate and diverse. The defense establishment made heavy demands on technical precision and inventiveness, and the challenge was, for the most part, successfully met. The average per capita income moved toward European levels. Israeli research was honored in the scientific world. Much in Israel was still imperfect, lacking outward form and inner harmony; but the country's aspect was becoming less rigorous, its culture less parochial, its energies more robust.

There is an instructive symbolism in the fact that archaeology and science were now the main intellectual enthusiasms of Israeli youth. Here was a people straining to transcend its smallness by an appeal to historic lineage and modern technology. Israel was commonly regarded as a progressive community with a modern scientific outlook; but it was also gripped by a constant search for its roots in a distant past. Much of Israeli life is taken up with reconciliation between past and future; between the old inheritance and the new potentiality; between religious tradition and modern progress; between Western pragmatism and Eastern spirituality; between free enterprise and collective ideals. Contradictions are sharp, and the tang of Israeli life is heightened by them. Above all, there was usually something in the national enterprise that expressed the instinct for innovation. Across the Gulf of 'Aqaba from Eilat, a bridge of commerce and friendship was patiently con-

structed toward the eastern half of the globe. The National Water Carrier, bringing water from where it was relatively abundant (in Galilee) to where it was disastrously sparse (in the Negev), was impressively completed and Galilee waters flowed southward to irrigate southern fields. For many years the fear of Arab displeasure had prevented the full development of Israel's diplomatic links. But from the late 1950s onward, the country was bountifully visited, inspected, explored, praised and often flattered by the world's intellectual community.

The sources of this fascination were complex. The building of new communities has always appealed to man's creative dreams. But after its first harsh decade Israel had a particular message in the context of its times. In the most advanced countries there was no longer a mystique of struggle. Life had lost its rhapsodical sense. On the other hand, the developing states had let their early exaltation give way to bitterness and despair. Institutional freedom had not been accompanied by any parallel growth in economic resources or social dynamism. The flags were not enough. The emblems of sovereignty were moving, but they could not bridge the humiliating gulf in capacities and resources between the privileged and the disinherited states. Thus the advanced countries admired Israel for its pioneering vitality, while new nations probed the reasons for its accelerated development. Some envied Israel for what it had already accomplished; others for what it still had to do. To Jewish communities, Israel imparted a sentiment of kinship, pride and mutual responsibility.

Israel's struggle against the Arab siege in 1956 had not changed its physical map. The borders were exactly as before. Free navigation in the Red Sea and tranquillity in the settlements near the Gaza Strip were tangible assets, symbolized and monitored by UN forces. But these gains themselves could not explain the new buoyancy in the national temper. The real transformation was in Israel's vision of itself. This had evolved from self-doubt to something like national confidence.

It seemed a good time for me to end my mission and make for home. Since 1947 I had led our delegation to the United Nations throughout the most stormy and tense period of our national struggle. For nine of those twelve years I had simultaneously headed our Washington embassy. In 1958 Ben-Gurion urged me to end my mission in time to take part in the 1959 election campaign. He had promised to include me in his next Cabinet and had added cryptically that Golda Meir announced her decision to resign from Cabinet office. (She eventually carried out this decision fifteen years later.)

In any case I believed that this was a time for me to seek new horizons. Before 1956 I had been known to Americans principally as a voice. We were now moving into an era dominated by television. I was known visually to cab-drivers, hall porters, salesmen in department stores and passersby. My book *Voice of Israel* had been published by the Horizon Press and was well

reviewed. The *Times Literary Supplement* in London even compared my speeches to those of Cicero and Burke and reflected on the diplomats of small countries who raised echoes wider than the dimensions of their countries seemed to justify. The American historian whom I most admired, Henry Steele Commager, had written in a review for a monthly publication:

As Ben-Gurion has been the spirit of Israel, so Abba Eban has been its voice. It is a voice of rare eloquence; indeed, now that Churchill and de Gaulle are off the stage it is the most eloquent of all the leading actors.

Faced with such reactions, it seemed elementary prudence to depart before people had time to change their minds. But in opting for the end of my mission, I was gripped by the challenge of ceasing to be a voice and becoming a hand upraised and a mind occupied in the decision-making process. As an ambassador I had not frequently encountered the ordeal of having to say things that I knew to be untrue, such as the contention that the Kibya raid in 1953 had been carried out by irate settlers, not by the Israeli army; or the statement that we had found a million blankets in Sinai and Gaza, which was adduced as proof that a Russian base was being prepared. (In fact they belonged to UN relief agencies charged with looking after hundreds of thousands of refugees.) I was afraid that the accumulation of such episodes over a long time would erode my personal credibility.

The final argument for separating myself from the allurements of my position in Washington and New York came from the family consideration. Eli had been born in New York and Gila in Washington, and since these were obviously provisional homes, there was need to give both of them the earliest possible chance of absorbing their Israeli heritage. Meyer Weisgal, the formidable creator of the Weizmann Institute of Science, had proposed that I become the second president of the Institute in succession to the great Chaim Weizmann himself, since whose death in 1952 the presidency had been left respectfully vacant.

Weisgal was an astonishing character whose appearance in a Charles Dickens novel would have seemed to carry eccentricity beyond even the most ambitious imagination. A shock of gray hair, a bulbous nose, thick eyeglasses that seemed to glint irascibly and a loud voice uplifted in a constant flood of strident, vituperative speech mostly in Yiddish, all seemed to put the mark of vulgarity upon him. But beneath this facade of overweening self-assertion was a deeply sensitive aesthetic sense, inspired by the urge to make Israel a home of science and the arts and to communicate an Athenian vision of excellence and precision. I never encountered a man whose outer form and inner soul were so discordant with each other. I accepted the presidency at a mammoth meeting headed by Ben-Gurion in the great Plaza of the Weizmann Institute in November 1958. It was understood that this task would not replace or defer the political and parliamentary role that Ben-Gurion had

promised. On my forty-fourth birthday, February 2, 1959, shortly after my return to Washington, I announced my intention to resign from both of my embassies with effect from the forthcoming May 15. It was also widely published that I would enter the political arena. The American press reacted with polarized versions: the first that I was obviously going to be the prime minister upon Ben-Gurion's retirement; the second that I was making a mistake to enter the political arena, where I would be devoured in short measure by the wolfish virulence of Israeli politics. It would soon emerge that both of these extremist predictions were off the mark.

The announcement of my resignation set off a moving reaction. A committee of tribute was formed, headed by Chief Justice Warren and Vice President Nixon and including the former presidents Truman and Hoover, the future presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and John F. Kennedy, and all the leaders of both houses of the Congress as well as the democratic leaders Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. Dozens of editorial articles appeared from coast to coast, not only in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ("he mobilized the English language and sent it into battle on Israel's behalf"), but also in newspapers in San Antonio, Texas, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and in Middletown, Connecticut. The significance of this for Israel lay in the fact that few Americans outside Washington could cite the name of the ambassador of a single country or, for that matter, of a head of delegation to the United Nations. Israeli diplomacy, for whatever reason, operated in the United States on an entirely original basis without reference to the general routine. The passage of time and the growth of familiarity have eroded this exceptionality to a large extent, and newspapers in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, no longer record the comings and goings of Israeli ambassadors. But the composers of crossword puzzles still utilize the fact that a name such as mine with two vowels and two consonants within a short word offers a convenient transition between the more challenging questions.

The intensity and range of the farewells compelled reflection on the reasons for the outpouring. It was evident that the idea of a Jewish state continued to fascinate and, sometimes, to baffle the American people. At the root of this emotion lay spiritual mysteries derived from our biblical heritage. The majority of the states represented in the United Nations held the biblical story in reverence and even regarded it as a factor in establishing Israel's right to statehood. In today's international community, the Hebrew bible is regarded by the majority of member nations as nothing but the literature of one small people, while other faiths have a numerical preponderance. I do not believe that we could have obtained membership in international organizations if we had delayed our application for a few years after 1949.

Beyond this mystique lay the spectacle of our recuperation from weakness and disaster. I had expressed this in an address at Notre Dame University, the sanctuary of Catholicism (and of football) in the United States: "Within a few years we have passed from a world in which the existence of a Jewish

state of Israel was inconceivable to a world that is inconceivable without its existence."

In all the major cities farewell occasions were organized; it was as if I were running an election campaign in America instead of preparing for one in Israel. In Chicago six thousand people assembled in the Opera House to hear Senator Paul Douglas express regret that I was not running in the United States as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. In New York Eleanor Roosevelt presided over an assembly of permanent delegates and expressed the wistful idea that "it must be wonderful to be young and to be in the service of such a cause." In Madison Square Garden, Abba Hillel Silver was the chairman at a gathering of 18,000 in which the surprise for me was the appearance of Yigael Yadin with a letter from Ben-Gurion, which he read aloud. The prime minister wrote:

Our international position continues to improve and you have no small part in that achievement. Your appearances in the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations brought honor to your country and pride to all your people. . . . It is in that spirit that I welcome you home . . .

John Foster Dulles had resigned in acknowledgment of the incurability of his cancer, and the news of his death reached me when I was afloat on the liner bearing me across the Atlantic. Israeli readers were surprised by Ben-Gurion's statement that "Israel has lost a friend." Few readers were conscious of the intimacy that had arisen between the two governments during the short period when the United States went over to a policy of containing and even resisting Nasser's disruptive policies.

I derived great satisfaction from my efforts to prove that American sympathy for Israel was a nonpartisan issue. The first Israeli reaction to the Republican victory in the 1952 election was that Truman's support had been a one-time, fortuitous episode sustained by the exceptional circumstance of his respect for Chaim Weizmann and that the geopolitical weight of the Arab world would assert now itself and Israel would be irresistibly pressured to return to the 1947 partition map, to admit a flood of hostile refugees and to abandon its hold on the greater part of Jerusalem. After eight years of the Eisenhower presidency, with all its many storms and occasional frigidities, our territorial situation was unchanged, our hold on West Jerusalem had tightened and we held the keys of our gates in our own hands. The amateurish procedures of the early years had given way to the institutionalization of the Israeli presence in the United States and the United Nations. There was a foundation on which a firm structure could arise.

After a luncheon in my honor at Blair House and a brief farewell to President Eisenhower, who gave me a photograph dedicated in his own hand: "Abba Eban, a distinguished representative of Isreal [*sic*]," Suzy and I began

to pack our possessions. We were sustained by the conviction that future presidents would know how to spell our country's name.

The memories that crowded in upon us were poignant. I had visited forty-two of the fifty states, had traveled two million miles and had fulfilled more than a thousand engagements as well as hundreds of UN meetings. I now found that it had been easier to live that decade than to celebrate it. There had been a transformation in our country's condition, and on the smaller level a change in my own part within the national context. It seemed a far cry from my arrival as a junior member of a Zionist delegation through the stormy UN debates in Geneva and Lake Success and the sudden assumption of a central responsibility for Israel's integration into the family of sovereign states. The storms and stresses of the succeeding years had been almost too swift and intense to be absorbed. What could be more rewarding than to lead two central institutions—the nation's leading embassy and its foremost arena of international contest—during the most formative period of the nation's struggle for independence and recognized legitimacy? I wondered aloud whether the domestic political arena to which I was directing my steps could offer similar emotional and intellectual satisfactions.

I may have idealized the diplomatic function. I had entered it at the summit without ever having been a second or first secretary or attaché or a counselor in a mission where there was no sense of suspense or cruciality and where no great issues hung in the balance. Having a low ceiling of boredom and a distaste for ceremonies and protocol, I doubt if I could have endured the idea of diplomacy as a professional routine. I was sustained in that conviction many years later when the eminent liberal economist and author John Kenneth Galbraith wrote a book that took the lid off the mysterious box in which the secret life of diplomats is enclosed. He must have discomfited many professional diplomats by exposing the inequality of their burdens. He wrote: "In India in my time there were some fifty ambassadors. . . . They were a spectacular example of what economists call 'disguised unemployment.' The ambassadors from Argentina and Brazil could not have had more than a serious day's work once a month. The more deeply engaged diplomats from Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium or Spain could discharge their essential duties in one day a week." The myth of the valuable cocktail party also crumbles before that corrosive pen: "I never learned anything at a cocktail party or dinner that I didn't already know, needed to know or would not soon have learned in the normal course of business. The emphasis that diplomats of all countries in all capitals accord to entertainment is the result of a conspiracy by which function is found in pleasant social intercourse and controlled inebriation."

Allowance must be made here for the humorous talent without which nobody should even begin to envisage a diplomatic career. But I can bear witness that I do not recall a single day in which twenty-four hours were even theoretically sufficient to accomplish the tasks of my two embassies. All my

successors would agree that relaxation and ease are not the destiny of Israeli representatives in Washington.

While most Israelis and many American Jews lived the Eisenhower period in a mood of unceasing hypochondria, my own final account was more relaxed. Others were worried by the sharpness of the 1956 crisis, while I was impressed by the rapidity with which it had been overcome. There were not many ambassadors who had watched that period in American history at close hand during the entire course of two administrations. This experience seemed to authorize me to comment on the two leading characters who controlled American foreign policy for eight years.

John Foster Dulles was a man of many gifts, which did not include a capacity to win trust or affection. His policy had its own rationale. His balance-of-power doctrine had respectable roots in diplomatic history and his habit of emphasizing the adversarial nature of Soviet power could be defended on pragmatic grounds. If one wants to mobilize the American people on behalf of a policy of strength and resistance, it is no use telling them that Soviet policy is innocuous. But what disconcerted many Americans in Dulles was his attempt to clothe his defense of American interests in the sanctimonious garb of a moral crusade. His experience and professionalism were widely regarded, but his claim to a particular spirituality was not taken seriously. He always made his principles coincide with his material aims. He often wrestled with his conscience and always won. He also had an irrational belief in the power of contracts to define and systematize the international community. His attempts to organize the "free world" by a series of treaty signatures has dissolved, leaving few traces behind. Who now remembers the Baghdad Pact and SEATO? He was popular in Germany because of his friendship with Konrad Adenauer, but his infidelity to France and Britain led to the crisis in 1956 when he first encouraged London and Paris and then turned his back on them when they resisted too strongly. He had a vision of the world in which the friends and the foes of his country would face each other in neatly defined columns, like the formations of great armies in classical eighteenth- and nineteenth-century battle paintings. He seemed to have no sense of the blurred, gray ambiguities that constitute a great part of international reality. He brought an excessively subtle mind into the service of an excessively simplistic view of the world order.

Eisenhower as a reality was better than his own image. In the light of the Vietnam War, which was mainly the work of the activist school of American diplomacy, many revisionist thinkers in the United States have become fascinated by the idea that success may be achieved not so much by doing great things as by avoiding foolish things. Eisenhower was often vehement in Cold War oratory but careful not to translate that oratory into action. After the eager actions of "the best and the brightest" in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, one of Ike's biographers was able to write:

He (Eisenhower) ended the Korean war, he refused to intervene militarily in Indo-China, he refrained from involving the United States in the Suez-Sinai crisis, he avoided war with China (over Quemoy and Matsu), he resisted the temptation to force a showdown after Berlin, he stopped exploding nuclear weapons in the atmosphere.

"Refused," "refrained," "avoided," and "resisted the temptation" do not have a heroic sound, but when Americans later came to reflect on what had resulted from the busy, energetic, daring leaders of later years, they had a nostalgic twinge of affection for those statesmen who were capable of constructive inaction. Within a few years of the end of the Eisenhower era, Vietnam would ultimately shatter the illusion of American omnipotence and undermine the consensus underlying the conduct of American foreign policy.

I would follow these events from afar. My Washington mission had to end someday, and it could not have ended on a more felicitous note, but in the end Suzy and I stood in Washington's National Airport bound for Israel via New York. My status was that of one of the 1,600 passengers about to set sail with his wife and two children on the *SS USA*. We had taken a last, lingering look at the home in Juniper Street and at the chancery in Columbia Avenue and had gathered up the mementos of our nine-year journey across personal and national history and had clutched each other's hand in acknowledgment of having seen great visions and dreamed great dreams—together. My dominant thought was that the next day no one would be obliged to report anything to me.

"Tomorrow to fresh fields and pastures new . . ."